

# Checking Your Blood Pressure

You should check your blood pressure 3 times a week. This can be done by checking it at home, with your own monitor, or at your clinic. When you buy a home blood pressure monitor, make sure the cuff is the right size and has been approved by the American Heart Association. Bring your monitor in so the nurse can make sure it is working correctly. Blood pressure readings can change throughout the day and with activities. So check it at different times of the day sitting in a chair at rest for at least 5 minutes. Bring your blood pressure diary to your clinic visits. We want you to check your blood pressure even if you feel well. If you have an elevated blood pressure, do not panic. That may worsen the blood pressure. Remain calm and follow the instructions below.

SYSTOLIC	DIASTOLIC	INSTRUCTIONS
Top Number	Bottom Number	
240+	140+	
180-239	120-139	Call your medical office immediately for advice
140-179	90-119	Check blood pressure 3 times a day 4 hours apart for 3 days. Call the results to your nurse.
100-139	60-89	Satisfactory range. Continue checking your blood pressure.
90-99	50-59	Check blood pressure 3 times a day 4 hours apart for 3 days. Call the results to your nurse.
80-89	45-49	Call your medical office immediately for advice
Less than 80	Less than 45	Call 911 and go to the nearest Emergency Room

## **Call your clinic nurse:**

If you have mild weakness, lightheadedness, just don't feel right, are off-balance, or if you have any questions about your blood pressure or medications.

## **Call 911 and go immediately to the ER if you experience:**

Chest pressure or pain	Shortness of breath	Significant swelling
Severe headaches	Confusion	Blindness or double vision
Severe lightheadedness	Difficulty talking or walking	Abrupt weakness in your face, arm or leg

## **Things that raise the blood pressure and give a false reading:**

1. Not sitting in a comfortable chair with your back supported, feet touching the floor.
2. Rushing. Take about 10 minutes to relax before taking a reading.
3. Smoking. It takes about ½ hour for the effect to wear off.
4. Anxiety.
5. Pain.
6. Caffeine intake more than your normal.
7. Physical activity.
8. Using a cuff that is too large or too small.
9. Stimulants such as Ritalin, illegal drugs.