Checking Your Blood Pressure

Getting an accurate blood pressure reading is important for your health. Be ready when you get your blood pressure taken.

Before

30 minutes before:
- Wear clothing that makes it easy to place the cuff on your bare upper arm.
- Avoid exercise. Blood pressure can increase during and shortly after exercise.
- Don’t smoke. Nicotine can increase your blood pressure.
- Avoid drinks with caffeine. Blood pressure can increase shortly after having caffeine.
- Visit the restroom. A full bladder can increase your blood pressure.

During

While you’re having your blood pressure taken:
- Sit quietly in the chair for a few minutes.
- Support your arm at heart level on a table or arm rest.
- Keep your back supported with the chair.
- Have your legs uncrossed and feet flat on the floor.
- Be quiet—talking can increase your blood pressure results.

After

Know what to expect:
- Taking a second blood pressure reading, a few minutes after the first one, may help your doctor get a better estimate of your average daily blood pressure.
- If your blood pressure is different from what you expected, please talk to your doctor or ask to have your blood pressure measured again.
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