

# MONITORING YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE AT HOME



**TAKE YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE 2 HOURS AFTER TAKING YOUR MORNING BLOOD PRESSURE MEDICINE**

**TAKE YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE 2 TIMES WEEKLY AND RECORD**

## **30 Minutes Before Taking Your Blood Pressure...**

- Do not eat
- Do not use tobacco
- Do not use medications known to raise blood pressure such as nasal decongestants
- Do not exercise

## **15 Minutes Before Taking Your Blood Pressure...**

Sit down and relax so your reading will be accurate. Do not take your blood pressure if you feel nervous or upset because these feelings elevate your blood pressure.

## **Three to Five Minutes Before You Take Your Blood Pressure...**

Do not talk. Sit in a comfortable position, with your legs and ankles uncrossed. Feet should be on the floor and your back supported. Place your arm, raised to the level of your heart on a table or a desk and sit still. Wrap the correctly sized cuff smoothly around the upper part of your bare arm. The cuff should fit snugly, but there should be enough room for you to slip one fingertip under the cuff. Be certain that the bottom edge of the cuff is 1 inch above the crease of your elbow.

## **Make Sure Your Monitor Is Accurate...**

Take your monitor with you and compare the readings of your device with the doctor's office. Ask your doctor or nurse to observe your technique to make sure that you are using the device correctly. It is a good idea to have your device checked every year.

## **Make Sure the Cuff Fits Properly...**

The size and position of the blood pressure cuff can greatly affect the accuracy of blood pressure readings. If the cuff is too small or too large, the measurements will be inaccurate. As a general rule, the inflatable part of the cuff needs to be at least as long as the widest measurement around your upper arm.

## **Use the Same Arm Every Time...**

Be aware that the blood pressure readings may be 10 to 20 points (mm Hg) different between your right arm and your left arm. For this reason, you may want to use the same arm for every reading. Blood pressure readings also vary through the day. Readings are usually highest in the morning after you wake up and move around, decrease throughout the day, and are lowest in the evening.

The instructions for using blood pressure monitors vary, depending upon the specific device you choose.

**High blood pressure increases your risk of heart attack and stroke.**

**Normal blood pressure is 120/80. Keep a record for your next appointment.**