

Home Blood Pressure Monitoring for Expectant Parents



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**HOme Monitoring for
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Introduction

High blood pressure is also called hypertension. This is when the force of blood pushing against your artery walls is too strong. There are different types of hypertension.

Chronic Hypertension

This means having high blood pressure that lasts a long time. It can run in families or be caused by other health problems, but things like eating unhealthy foods, not getting enough exercise, and stress can also make it worse.

Gestational Hypertension

This is high blood pressure that develops during pregnancy. It usually goes away after the baby is born, but it needs to be checked regularly and may sometimes involve medication.

Pre-eclampsia

This means high blood pressure that starts for the first time after 20 weeks of pregnancy. Pre-eclampsia is different from regular gestational hypertension because it also affects one of your organs, which is shown by changes in your blood or urine tests.

White Coat Hypertension

Sometimes people have high blood pressure numbers when they are in a healthcare setting. This may happen because they feel nervous. However their blood pressure is normal when they are somewhere else. Checking blood pressure at home can help you stay relaxed and get more accurate results.

Symptoms of pre-eclampsia

If you have any following symptoms, please call the maternity advice line:

- If you have headaches.
- If you have problems with your eyesight such as blurred vision or flashing lights.
- If you have pain at the top of your stomach.
- If you get swelling in your hands, feet or face that is sudden or severe.
- If you are feeling unwell.
- If you have a gut feeling that something is not right

Why have I been offered home blood pressure monitoring

You have been given a blood pressure monitor to use at home, to help you spot and manage high blood pressure during pregnancy. This can help to make sure you and your baby get the right care and stay safe. Checking your blood pressure at home lets you be in control, and many women find this easier and more comfortable.

Benefits of home monitoring

- There would be fewer trips to visit your midwife or doctor.
- It can be helpful if you get nervous at appointments, which is sometimes called white coat hypertension.

- It can be easier if you have children to care for or have work commitments.
- It can save you time waiting for appointments.

Do I have to check my blood pressure at home

No. You can choose not to do home blood pressure checks. Please speak to your midwife or doctor, who can explain other options.

How do I check my blood pressure

At your first appointment, your midwife will:

- Give you a blood pressure cuff and monitor to use at home.
- They may give you a prescription for urine dipsticks. These are to check for protein in your urine.
- Show you how to take your blood pressure.
- Explain how to enter your readings into BadgerNotes.
- Let you know how often to check your blood pressure.

If you are unsure about anything you can call the maternity advice line. The number is at the bottom of this leaflet.

At home:

- Wait at least 1 hour after taking any blood pressure medicine before checking.
- Make sure your clothing is not tight around your arm.
- Sit in a chair with both feet flat on the floor.
- Rest calmly for 5 minutes before starting.
- Put the cuff on your arm as shown in the device instructions.
- The bottom edge of the cuff should sit 2cm above the inside of your elbow.
- Rest your arm on a table or across your lap, palm facing up.
- Take your blood pressure as directed by the device.
- Stay quiet while the cuff is inflating and measuring.
- Wait 1 minute, then take a second reading.
- Enter both readings into BadgerNotes.

To know how to upload your results to BadgerNotes please watch the video using the link below or scan the QR code.

Vimeo

Website: <https://vimeo.com/1153542927?fl=pl&fe=ti>



To know how to take your blood pressure at home please watch the video using the link below or scan the QR code.

Vimeo

Website: <https://vimeo.com/1111607340>



How to report unusual results

After you have entered your blood pressure readings into BadgerNotes, you will see a message telling you what to do next based on your results. For example, it may 'say sit for 5 minutes and check again' or 'call the maternity advice line'.

A member of your care team will also check your results on BadgerNotes and will get in touch if there is anything to be concerned about.

To ensure your blood pressure results are being monitored at the right times, we ask that you do your blood pressure on a Tuesday and/or a Friday before 11:00 am unless informed differently.

Any results outside of these times are **not** monitored and if you have concerns relating to your blood pressure or symptoms of high blood pressure you will need to call the maternity advice line. The number is at the end of this leaflet.

Do I need to check my urine for protein

You may be asked to check your urine for protein during pregnancy. If so urine test strips will be provided at your onboarding appointment.

How to do the test:

- Use a clean sample. Do not use your first wee of the morning.
- Wipe your genital area before you wee to avoid mixing in discharge, which can contain protein and give a false result.
- Follow the instructions on the test strips and enter your result into BadgerNotes.

If the test shows protein:

- Try again with a fresh clean sample.
- If protein is still present, call the maternity advice line.

For a demonstration on how to take a urine sample, please watch the following video using the link below or scan the QR code.

Vimeo

Website: <https://vimeo.com/1116102756>



What do I do after the birth of my baby

Please bring your blood pressure machine with you when you come to the hospital to have your baby. If that is not possible you can return the machine to your community midwife or drop it off at the day assessment unit.

If you have any problems returning the machine, please get in touch with your community midwife.

Returning the machines helps us to lend them to other women who need them. We are very grateful for your help.

Individual Care Plan

<p>Please take your blood pressure on:</p> <p>Take in the morning at least an hour after medication. Upload your result by 11:00 am.</p>	
<p>Please dip your urine on:</p>	
<p>You do/ do not need to attend for a weekly blood test. The Midwife or Maternity Care Assistant (MCA) will also take your blood pressure and carry out urinalysis. This appointment is:</p>	

Contact Information

Maternity Advice Line

Tel: 0300 422 5541

This advice line is open at all times.

Further Information

To view this information on our website use the link or scan the QR code below.

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Website: <https://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/checking-your-own-blood-pressure-during-pregnancy/>



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Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.

Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation.

*Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial.

Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>



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