



# AMBULATORY BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORING



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DIGITAL VERSION

## 24-HOUR AMBULATORY BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORING (ABPM)

• Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring (ABPM) is when your blood pressure is being measured as you move around, living your normal daily life. It is normally carried over 24 hours. It uses a small digital blood pressure machine that is attached to a belt around your body and which is connected to a cuff around your upper arm. It small enough that you can go about your normal daily life and even sleep with it on.

### WHY MIGHT I NEED A 24-HOUR MONITOR?

- By measuring your blood pressure at regular intervals over 24 hours, your doctor is able to get clear pictures of how your blood pressure changes throughout the day. There are a number of reasons why your doctor might suggest this test:
- Want to find out if your high blood pressure readings in the clinic are much higher than they are away from the clinic (called the “white coat effect”).
- Want to see how well your medicines are working, to make sure they are controlling your blood pressure through the day.

- Want to see if your blood pressure stays high at night. If this is the case, it may need to change or adjust your medicines.

### WHAT HAPPENS DURING 24-HOUR BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORING?

- Normally the machine is fitted at your local hospital outpatient department, although some general practitioners may have their own.
- A 24-hour blood pressure measurement is just the same as a normal blood pressure check: a digital machine takes your blood pressure by inflating a cuff around your upper arm and then slowly releasing the pressure. The machine is small enough to be worn on a belt on your waist while the cuff stays on your upper arm for the full 24 hours.
- The machine then takes blood pressure readings at regular intervals throughout the day: usually, every 15-30 minutes during the daytime and 30-60 minutes at night. You will need to keep the monitor on through the night – you could put the machine under the pillow or on the bed while you sleep.
- Because the test is being carried out to find out what your normal daily blood pressure is, it is important to carry on with your normal routine and

do all the things you would normally do. The only things you should avoid doing for the day are swimming and having a bath or shower.

- At the end of the 24 hours you can remove the machine and cuff and give it back to the hospital. The machine will have stored all your readings, and these will then be analyzed.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENT MONITORING?

- Patient to stand or sit still with their arm supported during the measurement. (Patient can support their arm with their other arm if he/she is standing or rest it on a desk, table, cushion or pillow when sitting). Avoid talking or moving
- The cuff must be at heart level whenever a measurement is done.
- If the monitor has an alert mechanism, then the monitor beeps during the day to warn then the cuff will start inflating 5 seconds later it will then deflate. If the reading is successful it will beep (or another alert) again.
- Recording may be unsuccessful if you are on train or during getting on/off a bus or talking. If there is no apparent reason for the error tell to check the cuff is in the correct position and has not slipped, check the tubing has not kinked or that the tubing has not come apart.

- To allow the machine to work properly, it is important to make sure that the tube to the machine is not twisted or bent.
- Correct placement of the cuff should be checked and the bottom of the cuff should be approximately 2cm above the bend in your elbow.
- If you are wearing the monitor at night, take the monitor off their belt and put on the same side as the cuff, so that none of the tubing is around their neck. Either put under a pillow or safely on a bedside table away from water glass
- If you are asked to make a diary then you must document the time you went to bed, and time woke up. You shall write in the diary the names, doses and times of any medicines (including over the counter) took over the 24-hour period. Some people find 24-hour ABPM distracting and uncomfortable: if you feel like this when the readings are being taken, speak your doctor or nurse as it may affect your reading.
- You must not shower or allow the monitor to get wet.
- You should return the monitor to the clinic at the instructed time the next day.