

# Measuring Blood Pressure Checklist

Updated February 2026

## Prepare the Patient



- Verify patients have not engaged in activities within the last 30 minutes that can raise blood pressure, such as:
  - » Exercise
  - » Consuming caffeine
  - » Using nicotine
- Ask patients to empty their bladder to avoid elevated readings.

- Allow patients to rest quietly for at least 5 minutes before measurement (Canada: 1–5 minutes)
- Seat patients with back supported, both feet flat on the floor, and legs uncrossed.
- Avoid talking with the patient, and instruct the patient not to talk, during resting period and blood pressure measurement.



## Use Proper Equipment

- Ensure automated equipment has been validated and calibrated.



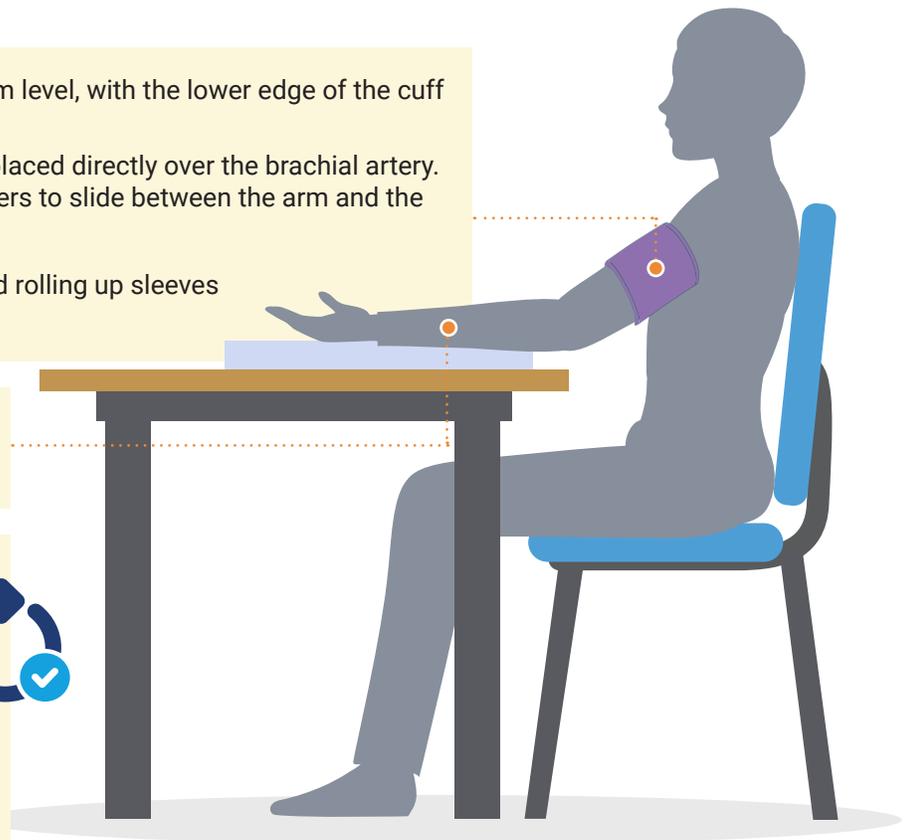
- Use the correct cuff size for the patient:
  - » The width of the bladder should be about 37% to 50% of the patient's arm circumference.
  - » When positioning the cuff, the cuff bladder should go at least 75%, but not more than 100%, of the way around the patient's arm.

## Use Proper Technique

- Place the middle of the cuff at the right atrium level, with the lower edge of the cuff above the elbow crease:
  - » The center of the cuff bladder should be placed directly over the brachial artery.
  - » Cuff should feel snug enough for two fingers to slide between the arm and the bottom of the cuff.
- Ensure the cuff is placed on a bare arm; avoid rolling up sleeves and restricting blood flow.

- Ensure the patient's arm is supported at the level of the heart.

- For a patient's first blood pressure measurement, check the pressure in both arms. If blood pressure differs between arms (e.g., >10 mm Hg), use the arm with the higher pressure.
- Take two or three readings, separated by one minute, and average the readings.



# Measuring Blood Pressure Checklist

Updated February 2026

## Use Proper Technique (continued)



- When taking a manual measurement (e.g., using a stethoscope and sphygmomanometer):
  - » Place the bell or diaphragm of the stethoscope over the brachial artery.
  - » Inflate the cuff to a pressure 30 mm Hg above where you can no longer feel the radial pulse.
  - » Deflate the cuff at a rate of ~2 mm Hg per second.
  - » Pressure when the first Korotkoff sound appears is the SBP.
  - » Pressure when all Korotkoff sounds disappear is the DBP.

## Document Results

- Document the time that the last blood pressure medication dose (if applicable) was taken before measurement.



- Provide result to patient in writing and verbally, and explain what it means. (See footnote a for definition of hypertension.)



Abbreviations: DBP = diastolic blood pressure; SBP = systolic blood pressure

### a. Hypertension in non-pregnant adults:

- Blood pressure  $\geq 130/80$  mm Hg, confirmed with ambulatory or home blood pressure monitoring (preferred), or at office follow-up (i.e.,  $\geq 2$  separate visits).
- ISH: Blood pressure  $\geq 140/90$  mm Hg at 2 to 3 office visits separated by 1 to 4 weeks, depending on blood pressure. A blood pressure of  $\geq 180/110$  mm Hg on a single occasion may be enough for a diagnosis if signs or symptoms of cardiovascular disease are present.

## References

1. Jones DW, Ferdinand KC, Taler SJ, et al. 2025 AHA/ACC/AANP/AAPA/ABC/ACCP/ACPM/AGS/AMA/ASPC/NMA/PCNA/SGIM Guideline for the Prevention, Detection, Evaluation and Management of High Blood Pressure in Adults: A Report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Joint Committee on Clinical Practice Guidelines. Hypertension. 2025 Aug 14.
2. Goupil R, Tsuyuki RT, Santesso N, et al. Hypertension Canada guideline for the diagnosis and treatment of hypertension in adults in primary care. CMAJ. 2025 May 25;197(20):E549-E564.
3. Unger T, Borghi C, Charchar F, et al. 2020 International Society of Hypertension Global Hypertension Practice Guidelines. Hypertension. 2020 Jun;75(6):1334-1357.
4. Muntner P, Shimbo D, Carey RM, et al. Measurement of Blood Pressure in Humans: A Scientific Statement From the American Heart Association. Hypertension. 2019 May;73(5):e35-e66.

Users of this resource are cautioned to use their own professional judgment and consult any other necessary or appropriate sources prior to making clinical judgments based on the content of this document. Our editors have researched the information with input from experts, government agencies, and national organizations. Information and internet links in this article were current as of the date of publication. Copyright © 2025 by Therapeutic Research Center. All Rights Reserved. trchealthcare.com

Clinical Resource, *Measuring Blood Pressure Checklist*. Pharmacist's Letter/Pharmacy Technician's Letter/Prescriber Insights. February 2026. [420266]. For nearly 40 years, our editors have distilled primary literature into unbiased, evidence-based recommendations with 0% pharma sponsorship. [Learn more](#)