

# Monitoring blood pressure at home: guidance for Canadian patients

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Infographic available at: <https://www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.210268/tab-related-content>

## 1 Purchase a home blood pressure monitor approved by Hypertension Canada, preferably one used on the upper arm

Most home blood pressure monitors sold commercially (> 85% worldwide) do not measure blood pressure accurately.<sup>1</sup> Hypertension Canada has a list of recommended devices that have been tested, are known to give valid readings and can be recognized in stores by their *Recommended by Hypertension Canada* logo (<https://hypertension.ca/bpdevices>).<sup>1,2</sup>

## 2 Measure blood pressure twice in the morning and twice in the evening for 7 consecutive days (28 readings total)

For people with an existing diagnosis of hypertension and stable blood pressure averages, home monitoring can be completed using the 7-day approach every 3 months.<sup>3</sup> People with no history of hypertension can monitor their blood pressure yearly.<sup>4</sup>

## 3 Home blood pressure readings that average to $\geq 135/85$ mm Hg are considered high

Elevated blood pressure readings in an otherwise asymptomatic person are rarely an emergency.<sup>4</sup> Almost all (97%) people who visit an emergency department after an elevated reading from a home or pharmacy monitor are discharged after being evaluated.<sup>5</sup> Elevated readings warrant a timely appointment with a primary care provider.<sup>4</sup> However, patients with elevated readings who are experiencing symptoms of a heart attack or stroke should seek immediate medical assessment.<sup>4</sup>

## 4 Lifestyle modification may lower hypertension

Consistent systolic measurements of 135–139 mm Hg or diastolic readings of 85–89 mm Hg can be managed with a range of lifestyle changes, including a healthy diet and physical activity for 30–60 minutes daily.<sup>4</sup>

## 5 Medication(s) are likely needed for systolic readings $\geq 160$ mm Hg or diastolic readings $\geq 100$ mm Hg

If high blood pressure is left untreated for months or years, the long-term risk of having a stroke or heart attack increases substantially.<sup>3,4</sup> Fortunately, reducing high blood pressure with medications prescribed by a primary care provider, combined with home monitoring and lifestyle changes, greatly lowers these risks.<sup>3,4</sup>

## References

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