



Dear Patient,

The practice is asking all patients who have been diagnosed as having raised blood pressure (hypertension) to consider obtaining their own automatic blood pressure device where possible, for use at home. It is becoming increasingly common practice for patients to be taking control of their health monitoring, and in these times of staying alert and social distancing, it is becoming even more popular, and important in some cases.

Home blood pressure readings have several advantages over those done at the surgery. Quite apart from the convenience, and the advantage to people who are shielding themselves whilst **Covid-19** infection remains a risk, home readings are more representative of one's true blood pressure. This avoids the common problem of falsely raised readings done at the surgery, so-called "white coat hypertension."

Blood pressure monitors can be purchased from as little as £10, from most pharmacies, larger supermarkets or household retailers. We do not recommend any particular brand or model, but we recommend that it is UK approved by the **British and Irish Hypertension Society**: their list of which can be found at <https://bihsoc.org/bp-monitors/for-home-use/>

If you would like us to send you a hard copy of this list, please contact the surgery and we will be happy to post it to you.

Also attached to the reverse of this letter are the **British Heart Foundation** recommendations for choosing and purchasing a home blood pressure monitor.

Good blood pressure control is important in preventing many conditions, including heart disease, stroke and kidney failure. Management of your diet, weight and activity level is the foundation of good blood pressure control, and we can provide you with more information and support with this. If you are taking medication, home blood pressure monitoring will help us tailor your medication more precisely to your needs, and avoid unnecessary over-treatment.

We will be asking you to take two readings twice a day for a week, and the average of these will be recorded as the blood pressure. If you choose to sign up to home blood pressure monitoring we will send you either an electronic spread sheet, which you can email back to us via Ask My GP, or we can send a paper copy for you or your carer/ family member to complete and return to us.

Blood pressure is usually reviewed annually, and you will be contacted when your annual review is due and the necessary monitoring forms and instructions will be sent to you. However, some conditions require more frequent monitoring, and being able to undertake and submit your own blood pressure readings when you need to or are asked to, should be more convenient for you in the future.

Please do inform us if you wish to register as a home blood pressure monitoring patient, ideally through Ask My GP, although if you wish to advise us in any other way, please do. If you have any concerns regarding choosing or purchasing a home blood pressure monitor, please contact one of the health coaching team who will be able to offer you further support.

With kind regards - The Bruton Surgery.

Guidance on choosing a home blood pressure monitor:

The British Heart Foundation recommends the following, and this information can be found on their very informative website pages explaining all aspects of blood pressure and high blood pressure:

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/risk-factors/high-blood-pressure>

and

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/heart-matters-magazine/medical/tests/blood-pressure-measuring-at-home>

The above pages also include useful tuition videos on how to take your blood pressure at home and much more. The British Heart Foundation website page guides choosing a home blood pressure monitor by recommending:

How to choose a home blood pressure monitor:

If you decide to take your blood pressure at home, you will need to get a home blood pressure monitor. There is a wide range of home blood pressure monitors available, but it is important to be sure that the blood pressure monitor you choose is accurate and the right one for you.

Buy a monitor with an upper cuff: If you are buying a home blood pressure monitor, choose one that measures your blood pressure at your upper arm, not your wrist or finger. The cheapest ones start from £10 and are available in most local pharmacies and larger supermarkets.

Make sure the cuff is the right size for your arm: Make sure you have the right cuff size for your arm. It should wrap snugly around your upper arm, with just enough space to slide two fingertips underneath. Most home blood pressure monitors will come with a medium-sized cuff. If your upper arm is particularly larger or smaller than average, you may need to buy a different sized cuff separately.

Make sure it's UK approved: If you are buying a blood pressure monitor, make sure it is approved for use in the UK. To make sure your monitor is accurate, choose one that has been listed as validated for accuracy by the British and Irish Hypertension Society (BIHS). This means that the digital monitor has gone through a series of tests to make sure it gives results that you and your doctor can trust.

Make sure you get it serviced every 2 years: It needs to be regularly serviced and calibrated to make sure it is accurate – generally, at least once every two years. This usually involves sending it back to the manufacturer, who will probably charge a fee for this. If this option is too complicated or expensive it may be easier and cheaper to buy a new monitor.