

Monitoring blood pressure at home: guidance for Canadian patients

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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.¹ 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>).^{1,2}

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.³ People with no history of hypertension can monitor their blood pressure yearly.⁴

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

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.⁴

5 Medication(s) are likely needed for systolic readings ≥ 160 mm Hg or diastolic readings ≥ 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.^{3,4} Fortunately, reducing high blood pressure with medications prescribed by a primary care provider, combined with home monitoring and lifestyle changes, greatly lowers these risks.^{3,4}

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