

# Blood Pressure Measurement Best Practices

**Use this card as a quick reference for best practices in blood pressure measurement.**



## PROPER TECHNIQUE

- ✓ Feet on ground
- ✓ Back supported
- ✓ No talking
- ✓ Bare upper arm
- ✓ Arm supported on bare surface even with the heart



## IMPROPER TECHNIQUE

- ✗ Feet not on ground
- ✗ Back unsupported (includes sitting on an exam table)
- ✗ Talking
- ✗ Clothing between arm and cuff
- ✗ Arm unsupported and uneven with the heart

## PRE-MEASUREMENT

1. Have the patient sit quietly in a chair for five minutes before the measurement, legs uncrossed, both feet on the ground and back supported. Do not ask questions or talk with the patient while taking the blood pressure.
2. Bare the upper arm for measuring and support the arm on a bare surface level with the heart.
3. Select the proper cuff size.
4. Place the cuff two fingers (one inch) above the bend of the elbow with the tubing in-line with the artery.

## MEASUREMENT

**Note:** Offices with electronic blood pressure equipment, eliminate steps 2 through 4.

1. Inflate the cuff to 180mmHg, or higher if needed. Then deflate the cuff slowly.
2. Document the blood pressure.
3. If the blood pressure is elevated, wait one minute and take a second measurement.
4. If this is the patient's first blood pressure measurement at your office, take two measurements in both arms, using the measurements from the arm with the higher pressure.
5. Do not round up or down when documenting the blood pressure.