

Guide to Creating a **Blood Pressure Monitoring Station**



Have **YOU** checked your
blood pressure lately?

Why should you have a blood pressure monitoring station?

High blood pressure causes or contributes to at least 1 in 4 deaths in North Carolina each year.¹

With just a little effort and some space, you can support the health of your employees or congregants with a blood pressure monitoring station. All it takes is setting up a space with an automated blood pressure monitor and encouraging individuals to measure and record their blood pressure, so they can share blood pressure readings on a regular basis with their health care provider.* A blood pressure monitoring station provides individuals a quiet place to check their blood pressure regularly, which is a proven strategy for better blood pressure management. It is recommended that the same blood pressure monitor is used each time someone checks his/her blood pressure. Since most people do not have their own monitor, creating a blood pressure monitoring station at your facility will provide the opportunity to check blood pressure in a convenient location.



Work together to create the station

Gather a team to create the blood pressure monitoring station. Divide responsibilities among team members.

1. Identify a room or a dedicated space

Work with your supervisor or a decision maker to identify a space. The space should be private, quiet, conveniently located and comfortable to allow users to get the most accurate reading.

2. Furnish the space

Locate a sturdy, comfortable chair and a stand or desk to hold an automated blood pressure monitor and support the user's arm that will be cuffed. The stand or desk should be tall enough for the lower part of the cuffed arm to rest comfortably with the upper part of the arm at heart level. You may also want to enhance the space with a rug, soft lighting, framed posters and a table or bookcase to hold pamphlets.

It is highly recommended that you use an upper arm/bicep cuff for measuring blood pressure. You should have cuffs of various sizes to fit different sized-arms. Visit dableducational.org to find recommended automated upper arm devices for self-measurement of blood pressure.

*Some blood pressure readings may be high enough to warrant immediate medical attention. Visit startwithyourheart.com/bloodpressurestation for more information.

1. North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, State Center for Health Statistics. 2015 Detailed Mortality Statistics for North Carolina. Accessed at schs.state.nc.us/data/vital/dms/2015 on December 12, 2016.



3. Print posters and pamphlets for the space that include:

- Instructions for measuring blood pressure
- Resources about the risk of high blood pressure
- Images of the correct position for taking blood pressure readings
- Resources on lifestyle changes for managing blood pressure such as physical activity, healthy eating, medication adherence and living tobacco free

4. Assign a caretaker

Assign an equipment caretaker who will be responsible for the regular upkeep of the blood pressure monitor and station. The caretaker can be a volunteer or an employee. He/she will need to purchase batteries for the monitor and make sure it is checked for accuracy at least once a year by having a health care provider test it against a calibrated blood pressure device.

5. Promote your new blood pressure monitoring station

Promote the blood pressure monitoring station internally via internal email, fliers or a newsletter.

Host a grand opening event. Invite supporters, staff and special guests to dedicate and open the station. The celebration could be part of a larger event to recognize the observance of blood pressure education, heart disease or stroke.

Encourage people to use the new blood pressure monitoring station, to log their blood pressure as often as recommended by their health care provider and to share their recordings with their health care provider.

MAKE IT OFFICIAL. Create a self-measured blood pressure policy or guideline, and include this in your orientation manual for new members or employees.

See <https://www.startwithyourheart.com/blood-pressure-station/> for a sample policy.

Consider printing a sign-in sheet/ release form that states that users are responsible for notifying their health care provider if their blood pressure is beyond normal levels.

Measuring Blood Pressure the Right Way

Preparation

- Calm, warm environment.
- No exercising in the preceding 30 minutes.
- No coffee, food, smoking, or alcohol in the preceding hour.
- Empty bladder and bowel.
- Patient calmly seated for five minutes.

Device

- Validated device (www.dableducational.org)
- Have the device calibrated regularly according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Cuff size: small, medium, or large according to arm size.

While Taking Blood Pressure

- **Back** - Rest your back against the back of the chair.
- **Feet** - Feet should be flat on the floor.
- **Arms** - Rest your arms on a surface at heart level.
- **Legs** - Legs should not be crossed.
- **Head** - Head should be at heart level.
- **Arm** - Arm should be bare and supported at heart level.

Home BP Measurement

- Two measurements, morning and evening for 7 days.
- Discard measurements of day 1.
- Average the numbers together.

Target Value: Below 135/85 mmHg

Office BP Measurement

- Two measurements, same arm, same position.
- Average the numbers together.
- Do not round the numbers.

Target Value: Below 140/90 mmHg. Below 130/80 mmHg: diabetes or chronic kidney disease.

Start With Your Heart

Don't Let Your Blood Pressure Erupt

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic mmHg (upper number)	Diastolic mmHg (lower number)
CRITICAL! Really High Blood Pressure Stage 2 Hypertension	160 or higher	100 or higher
DANGER! High Blood Pressure Stage 1 Hypertension	140-159	90-99
AT RISK! Prehypertension	120-139	80-89
SAFE! Normal	119 or lower	79 or lower

Classification of Blood Pressure for Adults

Source: Report of the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure.

Community & Clinical CONNECTIONS to Prevention & Health Equity

The ABCD's of Blood Pressure Measurement

Achieve a calm state

- Make sure you are quiet and relaxed
- Sit calmly without talking for about 5 minutes
- Make sure your reading isn't affected by caffeine, alcohol, exercise or smoking

Body posture is important

- Sit in a chair with feet on the floor
- Legs should not be crossed
- Arm should be bare and should be supported at heart level

Calibrate & check equipment

- Use a properly calibrated and validated instrument
- Check the cuff size on it!

Double check any high readings

- If blood pressure registers high, take two readings 5 minutes apart
- Confirm any elevated readings in the opposite arm

Start With Your Heart

My Blood Pressure LOG

Start tracking your blood pressure today.

Source: Million Hearts® Initiative

Start With Your Heart

Visit <https://www.startwithyourheart.com/blood-pressure-station/> for additional resources and to view a short video on self-monitoring of blood pressure.

Steps to Measuring Your Blood Pressure



Step 1

Make sure the cuff fits. Measure around your upper arm, and choose a monitor that comes with the correct size cuff.

Step 2

Don't smoke, drink caffeinated beverages, or exercise within the 30 minutes before measuring your blood pressure. Also, use the bathroom first. A full bladder can increase blood pressure slightly.

Step 3

Be still. Do not talk while taking blood pressure readings.

Step 4

- Sit correctly, with your back straight and supported (on a dining chair, for example, rather than a sofa).
- Place feet flat on the floor, with legs uncrossed.
- Support your arm on a flat surface (such as a table) with your upper arm at heart level. Make sure the middle of the cuff is placed directly above the eye of the elbow and approximately one inch above the elbow.
- Place the cuff on bare skin. Check your monitor's instructions for an illustration, or have your pharmacist show you how.

Step 5

Follow directions on the blood pressure device to start the reading.

Step 6

Take multiple readings. Each time you take your blood pressure, do it two or three times, one minute apart, and record all results.

Step 7

Measure your blood pressure twice daily, once in the morning (before breakfast and medications) and once at night, or as recommended by your health care provider. It is also important to take the readings at the same time each day.

Step 8

Record all of your readings, including the date and time taken. Share your blood pressure records with your health care team.



A single high reading of blood pressure is not an immediate cause for alarm. However, if you get a high reading, take your blood pressure several more times. If readings remain high, consult your health care professional to determine if a medical intervention is needed or your blood pressure monitor is malfunctioning. **When blood pressure reaches a systolic (top number) of 180 or higher OR diastolic (bottom number) of 110 or higher, emergency medical treatment is required.**