



## Proper Technique for Accurate Blood Pressure Measurement

*Blood pressure measurement is a routine task in most practices, but are you sure it's being done accurately?*

**7 SIMPLE TIPS TO GET AN ACCURATE BLOOD PRESSURE READING**

- USE CORRECT CUFF SIZE**  
Cuff too small adds 2-10 mm Hg
- DON'T HAVE A CONVERSATION**  
Talking or active listening adds 10 mm Hg
- PUT CUFF ON BARE ARM**  
Cuff over clothing adds 5-50 mm Hg
- SUPPORT ARM AT HEART LEVEL**  
Unsupported arm adds 10 mm Hg
- EMPTY BLADDER FIRST**  
Full bladder adds 10 mm Hg
- SUPPORT BACK/FEET**  
Unsupported back and feet adds 6 mm Hg
- KEEP LEGS UNCROSSED**  
Crossed legs add 2-8 mm Hg

The common positioning errors can result in inaccurate blood pressure measurement. Figure shows estimates of how improper positioning can potentially impact blood pressure readings.

Sources:

1. Acknowledging, et al. Recommendations for Blood Pressure Measurement in Humans and Experimental Animals Part 1: Blood Pressure Measurement in Humans. Circulation. 2005;111:527-726.
2. Handberg, L. The importance of accurate blood pressure measurement. The Permanente Journal Summer 2009; Volume 13 No. 3 51

This 7 simple tips to get an accurate blood pressure reading was adapted with permission of the American Medical Association and The Johns Hopkins University. The original copyrighted content can be found at <https://www.ama-assn.org/ama-johns-hopkins-blood-pressure-resources>.

Updated December 2016  
©2007 American Medical Association. All rights reserved.

**TARGET:BP™** |

*This tool was adapted with permission of the American Medical Association and The Johns Hopkins University. All rights reserved.*

### When your blood pressure (BP) is measured, be aware of the following guidelines:

- Validated, automated device should be used to measure your BP
- Correct size cuff
- Cuff placed on your *bare* arm
- You should be seated comfortably and quietly for at least five minutes – no texting
- Back is supported
- Arm is supported
- Cuff placed at your heart level
- Legs uncrossed
- Feet flat on the ground or supported by a foot stool
- No one should be talking during the measurement

### If your blood pressure is 140/90 mm Hg or higher, it should be confirmed.

- BP measurement steps should be repeated
- You should ensure your bladder is empty
- You should rest quietly for at least five minutes
- At least three BP measurements should be taken and averaged