

# Before taking your readings

What to know before I start measuring my blood pressure at home?

What to know before my cholesterol readings are taken?

What to know before measuring my blood glucose levels?

References

## What to know before I start measuring my blood pressure at home?

Your blood pressure (BP) can be affected by many factors. The following tips may be useful for you in getting an accurate reading if you are monitoring your BP at home.<sup>1-3</sup>



### 1. Getting started

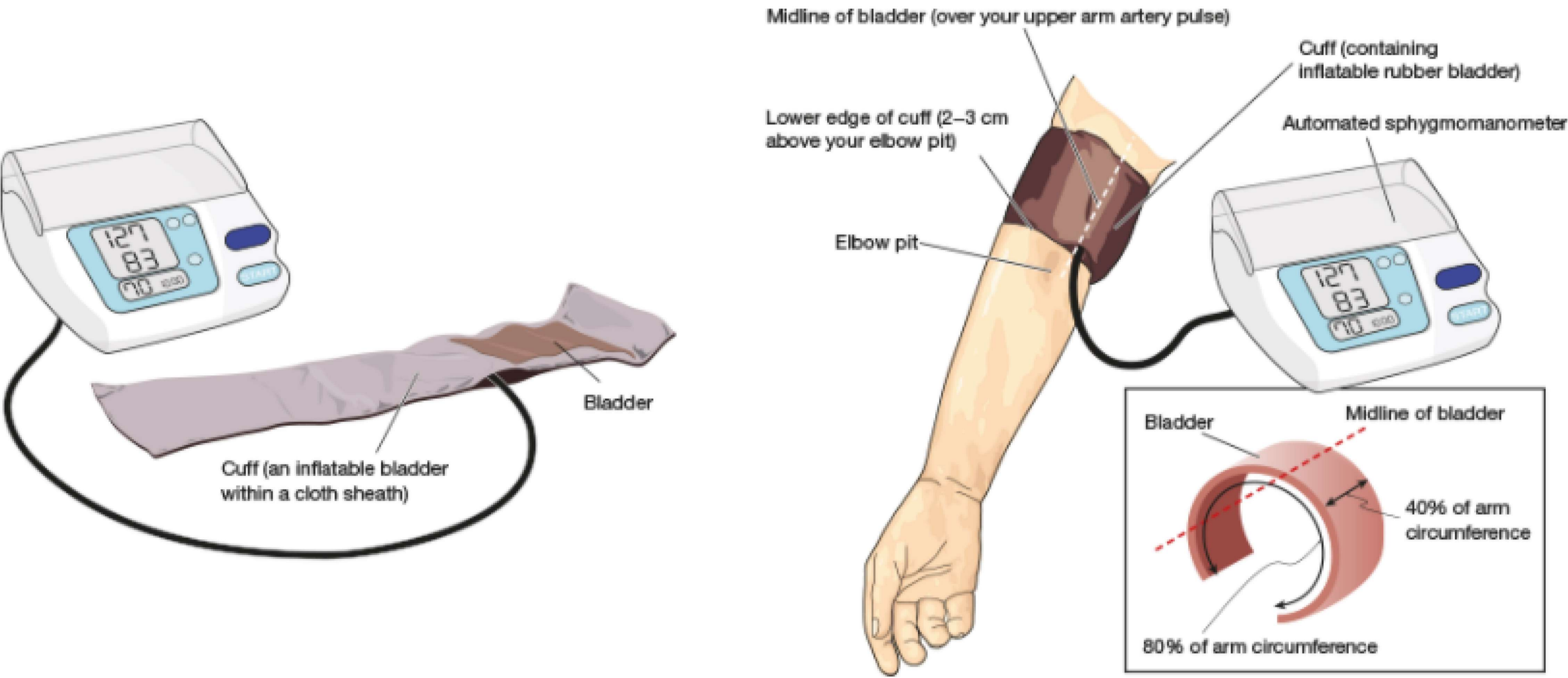
- Measure your BP at about the same time every day—once in the morning and once in the evening. Morning BP should be measured before any drug intake if treated, whereas evening readings should be taken before meal
- Additional measurements can be done as advised by your doctor
- Empty your bladder before taking your BP<sup>4</sup>
- Do not smoke, drink coffee, tea or caffeinated beverages, or exercise at least 30 minutes before taking your reading
- Rest for 5 minutes prior to taking the reading
- Sit on a chair with your back supported, and arms bared and supported at heart level
- Ensure your feet are flat on the floor (do not cross your legs)

### 2. Measuring BP with a digital sphygmomanometer

- Use a digital sphygmomanometer that is validated by a reputable body (eg, British Hypertension Society and American Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation).
- Ensure that the size of the cuff fits properly. The length of the bladder within the cuff should encircle at least 80% of your arm circumference, while the width of the bladder should be at least 40% of your arm circumference
- Ensure the middle of the cuff is placed directly above your elbow

#### Choosing a digital sphygmomanometer

There are many types of digital sphygmomanometer. Ask your healthcare professional for advice in selecting and using a device to monitor your BP at home



### 3. Recording your BP

- Record both your systolic BP and diastolic BP
- Take two or three readings at least 1 minute apart, and record all the results
- Share and discuss your BP readings with your doctor

## What to know before my cholesterol readings are taken?

Before having your cholesterol levels checked, you should<sup>5</sup>:



Avoid eating anything for at least 9–12 hours

## What to know before measuring my blood glucose levels?

Keeping an eye on your blood glucose levels is important if you have diabetes. You can monitor your blood glucose levels via two methods, ie, the HbA<sub>1c</sub> test and the blood glucose testing.<sup>6</sup> The HbA<sub>1c</sub> test reflects your average blood glucose levels for the previous 3 months.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, the blood glucose testing measures your current glucose level which is affected by food taken on that day.<sup>6</sup>

You can measure your blood glucose levels at any time of the day (random blood glucose test) and after abstaining from food for at least 8 hours (fasting blood glucose test).<sup>8</sup>

The following items will be required if you need to regularly monitor your blood glucose levels at home<sup>9</sup>:

- **A finger pricking device** (also called a lancing device) to extract a drop of blood for testing;
- **A disposable test strip** to collect the drop of blood;
- **An electronic glucose monitor** to read the glucose level in the drop of blood; and
- **A blood glucose monitoring diary** to record your blood glucose patterns, which can be affected by factors such as diet, exercise, stress and illness (remember to show this to your healthcare provider during appointments).

Click [here](#) to learn more about how to perform blood glucose testing at home and tips to record your blood glucose levels. You can also get advice from your healthcare provider.



You should inform your doctor if you are taking any medications (including herbal supplements), as some medications can affect your blood glucose levels.<sup>8</sup>

## References

1. American Heart Association. How to monitor and record your blood pressure. Available at <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/understanding-blood-pressure-readings/monitoring-your-blood-pressure-at-home>. Accessed 8 October, 2019.
2. Malaysian Society Of Hypertension. How to measure blood pressure? Available at <http://msh.my/education/>. Accessed 8 October, 2019.
3. Ministry of Health Malaysia. Clinical practice guidelines: Management of hypertension (4<sup>th</sup> Edition); 2013.
4. NHS choices. Getting a blood pressure test. Available at [http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/blood-pressure-\(high\)/pages/diagnosis.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/blood-pressure-(high)/pages/diagnosis.aspx). Accessed 19 September, 2019.
5. American Heart Association. How to get your cholesterol tested. Available at [http://www.heart.org/heartorg/conditions/cholesterol/symptomsdiagnosismonitoringofhighcholesterol/how-to-get-your-cholesterol-tested\\_ucm\\_305595\\_article.jsp#vwot\\_fi9600](http://www.heart.org/heartorg/conditions/cholesterol/symptomsdiagnosismonitoringofhighcholesterol/how-to-get-your-cholesterol-tested_ucm_305595_article.jsp#vwot_fi9600). Accessed 19 September, 2019.
6. Diabetes.co.uk. Controlling type 2 diabetes. Available at <http://www.diabetes.co.uk/conAAtrolling-type2-diabetes.html>. Accessed 19 September, 2019.
7. Ministry of Health Malaysia. Clinical practice guidelines: Management of type 2 diabetes mellitus (5<sup>th</sup> Edition); 2015.
8. Healthline. Blood glucose test. Available at <http://www.healthline.com/health/glucose-test-blood#preparation3>. Accessed 19 September, 2019.
9. Mayo Clinic. Blood sugar testing: Why, when and how. Available at <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetes/in-depth/blood-sugar/art-20046628?pg=1>. Accessed 19 September, 2019.