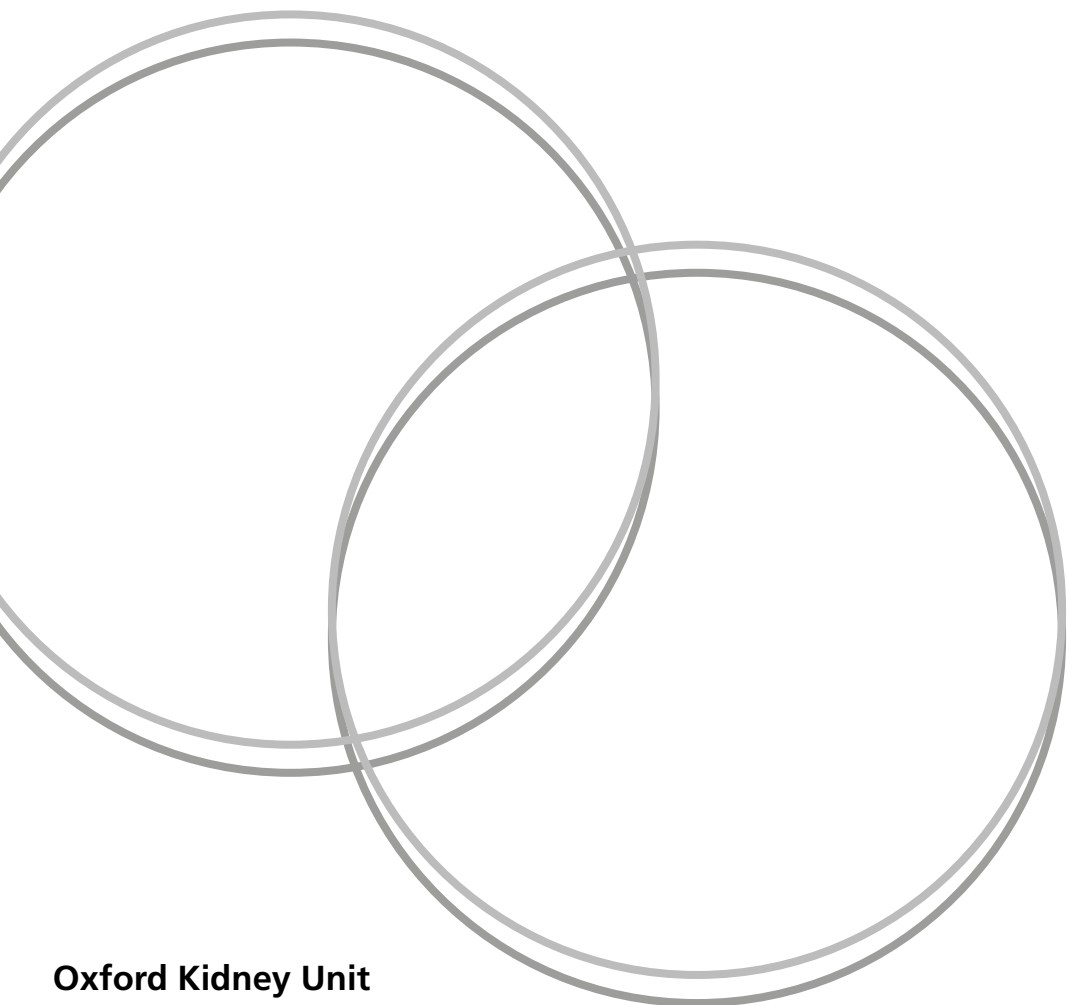




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

How to measure your blood pressure at home

Information for patients



Oxford Kidney Unit

Why measure blood pressure?

High blood pressure can damage organs in your body, including your kidneys, and can cause strokes and heart attacks. Keeping your blood pressure at a good level helps to reduce these risks.

When people visit their doctor or come into hospital they may develop 'white coat hypertension' (from feeling nervous or worried). This causes their blood pressure to rise and gives a false reading.

Checking blood pressure at home gives a better measure of its true average, allowing treatment to be better-tailored.

How to measure blood pressure at home

To get the most accurate results it is best to keep a blood pressure diary over a week, with blood pressure readings taken twice a day. Morning and evening are often convenient times to measure your blood pressure. It is best to do this for the week before your next renal clinic appointment.

Do not measure blood pressure in your arm if you have a functioning dialysis fistula or graft.

Take your blood pressure after your medications, and after sitting calmly for five minutes.

- Place the cuff on your upper arm. Relax your arm and rest your hand on your knee, the arm of the chair or a nearby table.
- Press the button on the blood pressure machine to inflate the cuff and sit calmly, without talking (talking can falsely raise the reading).
- Note down the result.
- After one minute take a second blood pressure reading and note that reading down as well.

Repeat this twice a day during the week before your renal clinic appointment.

Do not be alarmed if you get an unexpected high reading; a one-off high reading is usually nothing to worry about. Measure your blood pressure again at another time. If it continues to be high then discuss this at your clinic appointment.

How to record blood pressure readings

Keeping a clear blood pressure diary can help with planning your treatment and medication. You should bring your diary to any appointments in the Kidney Unit or when you see your GP or other specialists.

An Excel spreadsheet for recording your blood pressure measurements is available on the Oxford Kidney Unit website (www.ouh.nhs.uk/oku/patient-advice/default.aspx).

If you enter the measurements into the appropriate boxes it will calculate your average blood pressure over the week.

Alternatively, you may prefer to record your readings on your smartphone or tablet, if you have one.

If you prefer to use paper, there is a table you can use at the back of this leaflet. There are also printable blood pressure record pages on the Oxford Kidney Unit website.

Where can I get a blood pressure machine?

Machines are readily available both online and at high street chemists. They start at around £20. There is no need to purchase the more expensive models, but do make sure your machine measures your blood pressure at your elbow (not your wrist) and is accredited by the British Hypertension Society.

Please also make sure you have the correct sized cuff. If the cuff is too small the machine will give a reading that is higher than it should be. Most pharmacies will measure your arm to get the correct sized cuff, or you can find more information on the Blood Pressure UK website (see the end of the leaflet for website details).

If you have any questions after reading this leaflet, please speak to a member of the renal team at your next renal clinic appointment, or contact your GP.

Useful websites

Kidney Care UK

A charity which has lots of practical support and information for people with kidney disease.

Website: www.kidneycareuk.org

Oxford Kidney Unit

Lots of information about the Oxford Kidney Unit for patients and carers.

Website: www.ouh.nhs.uk/oku

NHS website

Information about high blood pressure.

Website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/high-blood-pressure-hypertension

Blood Pressure UK

Information about blood pressure.

Website: www.bloodpressureuk.org

Six Counties Kidney Patients Association

The SCKPA is run for patients by patients or family members.

They offer support to people suffering from kidney disease or who are on dialysis. They work closely with the Oxford Kidney Unit and have branches in Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, and Milton Keynes, and parts of Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Berkshire.

Website: www.sixcountieskpa.org.uk

	Date:	AM (6am - midday) readings:	PM (6pm - midnight) readings:
		Systolic: Diastolic:	Systolic: Diastolic:
Day 1		1: /	1: /
		2: /	2: /
Day 2		1: /	1: /
		2: /	2: /
Day 3		1: /	1: /
		2: /	2: /
Day 4		1: /	1: /
		2: /	2: /
Day 5		1: /	1: /
		2: /	2: /
Day 6		1: /	1: /
		2: /	2: /
Day 7		1: /	1: /
		2: /	2: /

If you need an interpreter or would like this information leaflet in another format, such as Easy Read, large print, Braille, audio, electronically or another language, please speak to the department where you are being seen. You will find their contact details on your appointment letter.

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