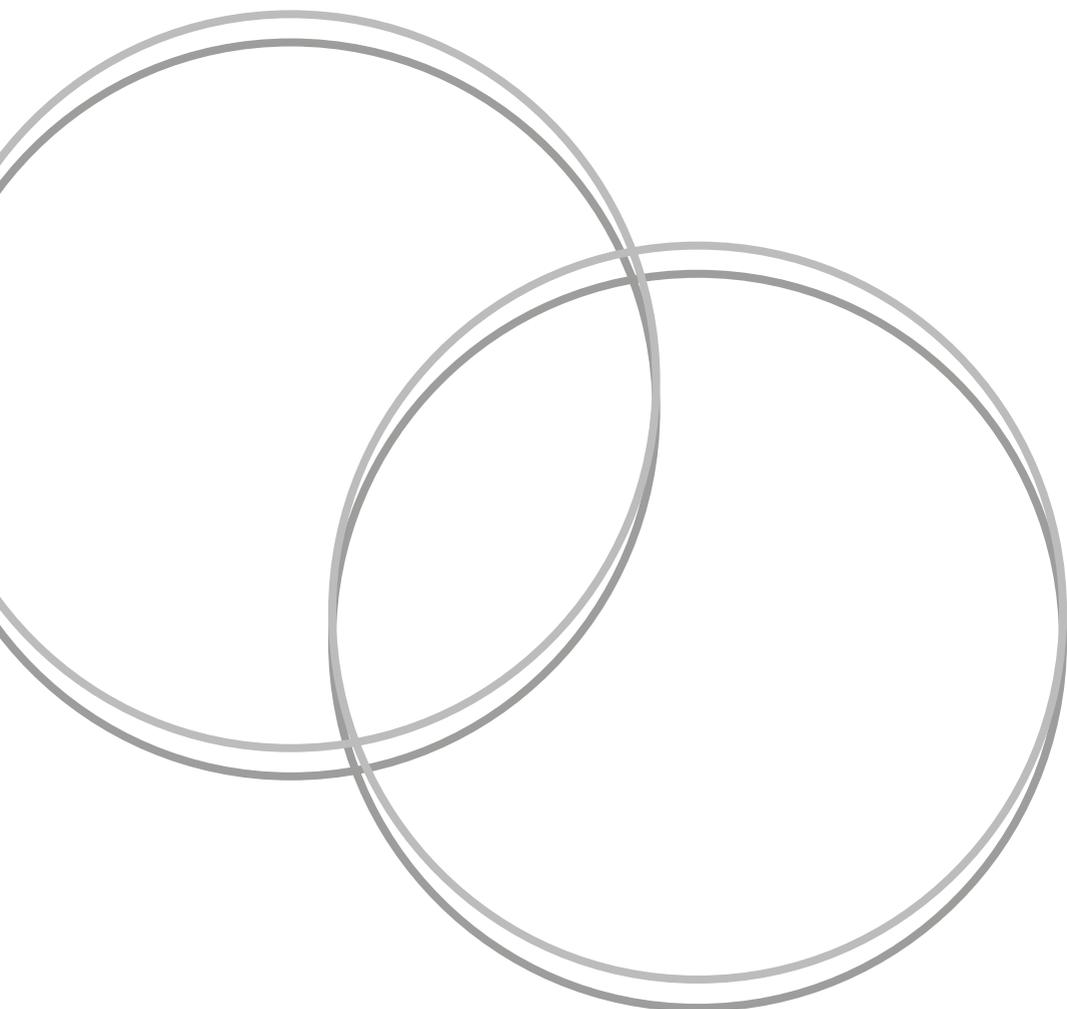




Oxford University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Monitoring your blood pressure at home during pregnancy

Information leaflet



Monitoring your blood pressure (BP) at home during pregnancy plays an important role in early detection, better management and timely intervention of high blood pressure.

Monitoring your blood pressure at home does not replace your usual care. You should still attend all of your scheduled scans and appointments with your doctor or midwife.

If you have any concerns about your blood pressure or your pregnancy, contact the **Maternity Assessment Unit (MAU)** on:

**01865 220 221** (24 hours)

## **Why we have asked you to monitor your blood pressure at home**

We might offer you home blood pressure monitoring if you have:

- chronic hypertension (high blood pressure that pre-dates your pregnancy or was diagnosed early in pregnancy)
- gestational hypertension (high blood pressure that develops after 20 weeks of pregnancy with no sign of pre-eclampsia)
- pre-eclampsia (high blood pressure with protein in the urine or other organ complications)
- higher risk of pre-eclampsia or a pre-existing medical condition, for example:
  - » kidney disease
  - » autoimmune disease
  - » pre-existing diabetes
  - » previous pre-eclampsia
  - » new protein in your urine.

If you choose not to monitor your blood pressure at home, you will still receive blood pressure checks as part of your care.

We may carry out more frequent blood pressure monitoring in clinic depending on your individual medical circumstances.

## How to measure your blood pressure at home

It is very important to use a **validated blood pressure monitor for pregnancy**. If you already own a home blood pressure monitor, your doctor or midwife can check if it is a validated device for pregnancy.

If you do not have a monitor, we will provide a monitor for you to use during your pregnancy. The cuff must be the correct size – your doctor or midwife can check this for you.

'Wrist' blood pressure monitors are **not** recommended in pregnancy.

## **1. Prepare yourself and the environment**

Check the instructions or ask your doctor or midwife to show you how to use your machine.

- Sit quietly for 5 minutes before taking a reading
- Sit with your back supported, feet flat on the ground, and arm resting at heart level (on a table works well)
- Make sure you have no tight clothing on the arm used to take the reading – the cuff should be on your bare skin
- Avoid caffeine, smoking or exercise 30 minutes before measuring

## **2. Place the cuff neatly around your upper arm**

- Place the cuff 2 to 3cm above your elbow and ensure the tubing is on the wrist side of your arm
- Ensure the tubing is not twisted or restricted in any way

## **3. Take two readings, one minute apart**

- Most monitors have a 'start' button on the machine; some home monitors require pumping the cuff first to inflate it
- Record the second reading on the BadgerNet notes app

## **4. Interpret your results**

- Blood pressure is displayed on the monitor screen as two numbers
- The systolic (SYS) is the top number and the diastolic (DIA) is the bottom number; there may also be a pulse reading on the screen



**Your blood pressure readings on the BadgerNet notes app are not routinely checked by a doctor or midwife.**

If your blood pressure is **high**, you will receive an **alert** when you document it on the BadgerNet notes app. This will instruct you to seek **medical advice**.

For pregnant women/people at home, the target blood pressure is **below 135/85 mmHg**.

Your doctor may recommend a lower target, depending on your individual medical circumstances.

# Chart for interpreting self-monitored blood pressure (BP) readings

Level	BP /mmHg	Action
<b>High</b>	<b>SYS</b> 150 or more and/or <b>DIA</b> 100 or more	Your BP is <b>high</b> . Sit quietly for 5 minutes then measure it again. Contact the Maternity Assessment Unit (MAU) today and continue to monitor your BP daily.
<b>Raised</b>	<b>SYS</b> 140 - 149 and/or <b>DIA</b> 90 - 99	Your BP is <b>raised</b> . Sit quietly for 5 minutes then measure it again. If your repeat reading is raised, contact the Maternity Assessment Unit (MAU) within 24 hours and continue to monitor your BP daily.
<b>High normal</b>	<b>SYS</b> 135 - 139 and/or <b>DIA</b> 85 - 89	Your BP is near the ' <b>raised</b> ' <b>threshold</b> . Sit quietly for 5 minutes then measure it again. If your repeat reading is still <b>high normal</b> , monitor your BP daily.
<b>Normal</b>	<b>SYS</b> 110 - 134 and/or <b>DIA</b> 70 - 84	Your BP is within <b>normal range</b> . Continue BP monitoring and your current care.
<b>Low</b>	<b>SYS</b> 109 or less and/or <b>DIA</b> 69 or less	If you are <b>not</b> taking BP medication, your BP does not need further action. If you are taking BP medication, your BP is low. Sit quietly for 5 minutes then measure it again. If your BP is still low, contact the Maternity Assessment Unit (MAU) within 24 hours.

## **When to contact the Maternity Assessment Unit (MAU)**

Please call and attend if you have any of these symptoms of high blood pressure, even if your home readings are within normal range.

- Blood pressure readings consistently equal to or more than 140/90 mmHg
- Severe headache, visual changes or upper abdominal pain
- Sudden swelling in your face, hands or feet
- Reduced baby movements
- Shortness of breath or chest pain
- Any vaginal bleeding

**Tel: 01865 220221 (24 hours)**

If a blood pressure monitor has been loaned to you during your pregnancy, please return it to the hospital midwives when you attend to have your baby.

## Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
[www.ouh.nhs.uk/information](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/information)



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*Making a difference across our hospitals*

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