Home Monitoring of Blood Pressure

Your child needs to have his blood pressure checked at home. This is to help you and the doctor monitor your child’s health.

Take your child’s blood pressure at the following times:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Equipment Needed:

- **Blood Pressure Cuff:** The cuff should cover about 75% of the upper arm and wrap completely around it. As your child grows, the cuff may need to be changed to a bigger size.

- **Sphygmomanometer:** An instrument to measure blood pressure.

- **Stethoscope:** Check the stethoscope before using it. Leaks in the tubing, loose fitting connections, or other equipment problems can cause incorrect measurements.

- **Automated Digital Blood Pressure Machine:** Be sure to use the correct size cuff as directed for your child.

How to take your child’s blood pressure:

1. Have your child sit quietly for at least 2 minutes before you take his blood pressure. Infants and toddlers can be held or laid down. Older children can sit or lie down. Try to use the same arm in the same position each time you check the blood pressure.

2. Use your first and second fingers to feel the brachial artery pulse (located on the inside of the arm at the bend of the elbow).

3. Wrap the blood pressure cuff around the upper arm (just above the elbow) with the center of the cuff over the brachial artery. The cuff should be tight enough that you should be able to slide only one finger under the edge of the cuff.

4. If measuring blood pressure manually, place the stethoscope ear pieces in your ears. Then place the stethoscope’s diaphragm (the disc portion) over the brachial pulse. If using a digital blood pressure machine, follow the manufacturer's directions.

5. Turn the screw on the cuff clockwise to close it. Then squeeze the bulb rapidly to pump up the cuff. Pump the cuff to 20 mm points higher than the last systolic pressure (the top number of a blood pressure reading).

6. While holding the stethoscope over the brachial pulse, turn the bulb’s screw counter clockwise. Slowly allow the air to escape from the cuff while watching the dial and listening for the first sound. This number is the systolic pressure. If the first sound is heard immediately, reinflate the cuff to 20-30 mm higher, then begin again.
7. Continue to slowly let the air out of the cuff while watching the dial. Listen for a muffling or the disappearance of the sound. This number is the diastolic pressure.

8. Deflate the cuff completely. It is best to measure the blood pressure 2 or 3 times.

9. Record all the blood pressure readings, date and time on the home record. (Your doctor may also ask you to record the site (which arm) where the blood pressure was taken on the record.) If your child is taking blood pressure medication(s), also record the time he takes his medication(s). Bring the home record with you to all clinic visits. Have the home record available when you talk to the nurse or doctor on the phone.

Follow-Up:

Notify your child’s doctor immediately if the blood pressure is:

Higher than __________/__________, or
Lower than __________/__________

Call your child’s doctor or clinic at _______________________ if:

- You have any other questions.
- You are having problems with the equipment.