

Did you know? Your posture makes a difference when checking your blood pressure? Whether you are at home or in your doctor's office, remember to check your posture and other very important tips:

- **Sit correctly.** Your back should be straight and supported, with you seated on a chair rather than, say, on the examining table. Your feet should be flat on the floor, with your legs uncrossed. Your arm should be supported on a flat surface (such as a table) with the upper arm at heart level.
- **Double-check your drugs.** Certain medications, such as over-the-counter decongestants, prescription amphetamines and the steroid prednisone, can increase blood pressure. make sure your physician knows the drugs you take.
- **Go to the bathroom first.** A full bladder can raise blood pressure by as much as 15 points systolic (the top number) and 10 points diastolic (the bottom number).
- **Measure twice.** If your blood pressure reading is high, your doctor or nurse might measure your pressure again at the end of the exam, when you're usually more relaxed. The lower reading is usually more accurate.
- **Remain quiet.** Talking can raise your blood pressure by up to 10 points on either the top or bottom number.
- **Check the cuff.** Measurements taken over clothing or with too small a cuff can boost blood pressure by as much as 50 points.



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