

24-Hour Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring

What is 24-hour ambulatory blood pressure monitoring?

Ambulatory blood pressure monitoring (ABPM) measures your blood pressure over the course of a full day (24 hours). You will wear a blood pressure cuff on your upper arm that connects to a monitor. The monitor records your blood pressure readings 3 times per hour while awake and 1 time per hour while sleeping.

Why monitor blood pressure for 24 hours?

When you measure your blood pressure in your usual daily routine it gives your doctor a better idea of how your blood pressure changes throughout the day. Some reasons for having ABPM:

- If you have white coat hypertension: high blood pressure in clinic settings (around medical staff or doctors) with lower blood pressure outside of clinic.
- If you have high blood pressure without a diagnosis of hypertension. Blood pressure may be high sometimes and may need to be measured more.
- To make sure your blood pressure medicines are working as they should all day.
- To assess symptoms such as, feeling lightheaded, dizzy or headaches, to check if these are due to blood pressure.

The Blood Pressure Monitor

The monitor is a small box that connects to the cuff on your arm. The monitor remains in a black pouch throughout the day. You may wear it with a belt to keep it up on your side and out of the way. The monitor screen

will be black and will not display any blood pressure readings.

Reminders and Tips

When the cuff inflates and you feel the cuff begin to tighten, stop what you are doing and remain as still as you can (without putting yourself at risk). This allows the cuff to get your accurate blood pressure. Relax your arm down by your side. If you are walking or standing, remain standing and relax the arm with the cuff to your side.

If vigorous activity is part of your normal day, you may need to modify in order to pause and stay as still as possible during the blood pressure readings. We want you to go about your normal routine. The monitor will result in added errors if there is too much movement during a reading.

If the monitor misses a reading, you will feel the cuff inflate again in 2 minutes to try another reading. If the reading results in an error, it will make one more attempt after 2 minutes before going back to its normal interval.

When you are ready for bed, remove the cord from around your neck and place the monitor by your side. It should be placed far enough away so you do not roll on it.

Do not wear the monitor into the shower/bath. Remove the cuff from your upper arm and set aside. Do not disconnect anything or push any buttons on the monitor. After your shower, place the cuff back on your upper arm.

Putting the Cuff Back On

Make sure the cuff is in the correct position when on your arm. The rubber tube should point upward and in the center of your upper arm. Check the cuff and place it above the crease of your arm. Make sure the rubber tubing is not pinched or kinked to allow proper air flow.

You may take the cuff off if it causes pain. Remove the cuff to rest the arm for 5-10 minutes in between readings. Place the cuff back on your arm as directed above.

If the cuff is causing pain and you want to stop the test you may turn the monitor off. Hold the circle button on the lower right of the monitor as it beeps. A message will appear “Do you want to switch the unit off?” Use the arrow buttons to highlight “yes” and press the circle button to select. The monitor will turn off. It cannot be turned back on to start the test. Once you turn the monitor off, the test is over.

Record Activity

The activity log is an important part of the ABPM test and needs to be filled out. List changes in activity or symptoms throughout your day. If you are doing the same activity for an extended time you do **not** need to write this over and over, instead write ranges

of time. Record your bedtime and wake time. Also record if you get up during the night to use the restroom or for any other reason.

Where to Return

The cuff, monitor, activity log, and belt (if you were given one) must be returned to the Preventive Cardiology Clinic. Follow the instructions given to you. All ABPM equipment must be returned the next business day. It must be hand-delivered back to the clinic. There is not a mail-back option.

Results

Upon your return the next day to the Preventive Cardiology Clinic, we will remove the monitor, review the activity log, and discuss any concerns or questions with you. We will then download the results from the monitor and prepare a report for a UW Health Cardiologist to read. A final report will be sent to your provider who will give you the results. If you have not received a call within 5-7 business days, place a call to your provider who ordered the test.

Who to Call

Preventive Cardiology Clinic
Monday -Friday, 8 am to 4:30 pm
608-263-7420.

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 5/2020. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7970