

24-Hour Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring

Ambulatory blood pressure monitoring (ABPM) measures your blood pressure over the course of a full day (24 hours). Your doctor may order this test to:

- Check for white coat hypertension when blood pressure is high at clinic visits but lower outside the clinic.
- Learn more about high blood pressure readings when you do not have a diagnosis of hypertension.
- Make sure your blood pressure medicine is working throughout the day.
- Find out if symptoms, such as dizziness, lightheadedness, or headaches, may be related to your blood pressure.

Blood Pressure Monitor

A 24-hour blood pressure monitor measures your blood pressure while you go about your normal day. This helps your doctor see how your blood pressure changes during the day and night.

The monitor is a small box that connects to the blood pressure cuff on your arm. It stays in a black pouch. You can wear it on a belt at your side to keep it out of the way. The screen will stay blank and will not show your blood pressure readings.

Blood Pressure Cuff

You will wear a blood pressure cuff on your upper arm. The cuff is connected to the monitor.

The monitor records your blood pressure **3 times each hour while you are awake** and **1 time each hour while you are sleeping**.

When the cuff starts to inflate and tighten:

- Stop what you are doing and stay as still as you can.
- Let your arm relax at your side.
- If you are standing or walking, stop and remain standing.
- **Do not** put yourself at risk to stay still.

These steps help the monitor get an accurate blood pressure reading.

Go about your normal daily routine. If you do vigorous activity, you may need to pause when the cuff inflates. Too much movement can cause errors and prevent the monitor from getting a reading.

If the monitor cannot get a reading, it will try again in 2 minutes. After that, it will return to its normal schedule.

Sleep

Before you go to bed, remove the cord from around your neck. Place the monitor next to you while you sleep. Keep it far enough away so you do not roll onto it during the night.

Bathing

When you take a shower or bath:

- **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.

Removing the Cuff

If the cuff is causing pain and you want to stop the test, you can turn off the monitor.

1. Press and hold the circle button in the lower right corner of the monitor until it beeps.
2. When the message "**Do you want to switch the unit off?**" appears, use the arrow buttons to highlight "**Yes**".
3. Press the circle button to select "**Yes**".

The monitor will turn off. Once it is turned off, the test is over and cannot be restarted. Let your arm rest for 5-10 minutes between readings, then put the cuff back on.

Putting the Cuff Back On

If you need to put the cuff back on, make sure it is in the correct position.

1. Place the cuff on your upper arm above the crease of your elbow.
2. Make sure the rubber tube is centered on the inside of your upper arm and points upward.
3. Check that the tubing is not pinched, twisted, or kinked.

Record Activity

The activity log is an important part of the ambulatory blood pressure monitoring (ABPM) test. This information helps your care team better understand your blood pressure readings. Fill it out throughout the day.

- Write down any changes in activity or any symptoms you have.
- If you do the same activity for a long time, write the time range instead of repeating the activity.
- Record when you go to bed and when you wake up.
- Record any time you wake up during the night, including trips to the restroom or any other reason.

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 © 8/2026 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7970

Returning Equipment

The cuff, monitor, activity log, and belt (if you were given one) must be returned to the Cardiology Clinic. Follow the instructions given to you. All equipment must be returned on the next business day by 5pm. It must be hand-delivered back to the clinic. There is not a mail-back option.

Results

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, call the provider who ordered the test.

Who to Call

If you have questions, please contact your provider through MyChart or call your provider listed in your After Visit Summary or After Hospital Care Plan. For a list of UW Health Clinics, visit www.uwhealth.org/.