

CDC WW Guidance for accurate blood pressure measurement

Accurate blood pressure measurement is critical for detecting and managing high blood pressure.

The JNC 7 report and the AHA recommend the following steps for accurately measuring blood pressure. The CDC has added WW-specific guidance to these recommendations.

1. Clients should not smoke, exercise, or have caffeine for at least 30 minutes before their blood pressure is measured.
2. Clients should be seated quietly for at least 5 minutes in a chair (rather than on an exam table), with back supported, legs uncrossed, feet on the floor, upper arm bared, and arm supported at heart level.
3. Neither patient nor the person taking the measurement should talk during the procedure.
4. To ensure accuracy, use an appropriate size cuff (cuff bladder encircling at least 80% of the arm). Many adults will require a large adult cuff.
5. Use a mercury sphygmomanometer, a recently calibrated aneroid manometer, or a validated electronic device to measure blood pressure. When using a manual device, the mercury column should be deflated at 2 to 3 mm per second.
6. Systolic blood pressure (SBP) is the point at which the first of two or more sounds is heard (phase 1) and diastolic blood pressure (DBP) is the point before the disappearance of sounds (phase 5). Record the measurement to the nearest 2 mm Hg.
7. Measure and record at least two measurements, separated by a minimum of 2 minutes. If the first two readings differ by more than 5 mm Hg, obtain additional readings. WISEWOMAN requires that two measurements be reported.
8. If you have three measurements and two measures are within 5 mm Hg you should throw out the outlier and record the two that are within 5 mm Hg.
9. Continue to measure until you have two BPs that are not greater than 5 mm Hg apart. If you have readings done by non-WW providers that are not within 5 mm Hg,† then you would submit the two out of three that have the least variance between the two.
10. Clinicians should give each client specific blood pressure numbers and goals, both verbally and in writing.

For more information, contact Nancy Knapp, Project Director at 966-8746 or nancy.knapp@searhc.org

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