

Information for patients and carers

Home monitoring of high blood pressure in patients with kidney disease

This leaflet is for kidney disease patients who choose to
monitor their blood pressure at home



What is high blood pressure?

High blood pressure (**hypertension**) refers to the pressure that the blood applies to the arteries. The systolic pressure measures pressure as the heart contracts and the diastolic pressure measures the pressure as the heart relaxes. This is read as systolic over diastolic (e.g. 120 over 80).

Why is blood pressure so important for patients with kidney disease?

Almost all kidney patients suffer from high blood pressure. It is both a cause and a complication of kidney disease. High blood pressure worsens the progression of kidney disease and blood pressure control is **essential** to counteract this.

In addition, all kidney patients have a higher risk for diseases of the heart, and the major vessels (cardiovascular disease) and blood pressure control is crucial to avoid this.

What should the blood pressure be?

Current UK guidelines give target blood pressures for patients with and without kidney disease and the target blood pressure may also depend on other medical problems, age, and the type of kidney problem.

Your kidney doctor will let you know what your target blood pressure is

Ask your kidney doctor about the target if you are unsure.

How is high blood pressure monitored?

Treatment for high blood pressure can be monitored using blood pressure readings done in clinic and through a 24-hour blood pressure monitor. This is a test your doctor can request which involves coming to the hospital and having a monitor fitted on your arm which stays on for

24 hours and which you bring back to the hospital the next day. You do not stay in the hospital for this test

How can I check my blood pressure at home?

Home blood pressure monitoring is a **great addition** to these tests because it can be done by yourself or by a relative or carer. You should use a simple blood pressure apparatus with an upper arm (NOT wrist) cuff.

These machines are available at all pharmacies and cost between £10 and £50.

Special machines are available for patients with visual impairment. Special cuff sizes may be needed for obese patients. Please ask your pharmacist who will be able to offer advice.

The blood pressure should be measured when seated and with the arm and cuff at the level of the heart. Do not take your blood pressure if in a hurry or immediately after exercise (it will be high, which is normal in that situation). At least, you should be relaxed and seated for five minutes.

How often should I check my blood pressure at home?

Ask your physician how often you should check your blood pressure (between three times daily and weekly). Try to establish some routine (e.g. every evening before 7pm news). Record the readings in a little booklet and have it with you if you see the GP or the Nephrologist. This will enable the doctor to see what your blood pressure recordings have been.

What do I do if my blood pressure at home is too high?

High blood pressure is **treatable**. Treatment reduces the risk of heart attack and stroke. Well-controlled blood pressure also slows the progression of kidney disease. Treatment is with tablets but **weight loss and reducing the salt intake** also help. Avoid salty food, extra salt and liquorice. Regular use of decongestants (i.e. nasal sprays, sachets and tablets) may elevate blood pressure so should be avoided

Many patients require more than one tablet for blood pressure control. All tablets can have side effects. This also applies to tablets used to control high blood pressure. If you think you have side effects, it is important that you report them to your GP straight away (**Do not** just stop taking any medication without first discussing it with your doctor)

How can I help the medical team that looks after my high blood pressure?

Bring a list of your medications to every appointment.

If you cannot access your **regular medications list** on your NHS, Patient Access and/or MyGP App on your smartphone then you should ask your community pharmacy or GP surgery for a printout of your repeat prescription and have it with you when you see members of the kidney team in clinic. Please also mention any one-off or acute medications you may be currently taking.

For every appointment with your GP/Nephrologist bring your booklet with blood pressures and a **CORRECT list of your repeat prescription**. It is essential that **ALL** doctors know your medication,

particularly if several doctors GP, Nephrologist, heart specialist etc. are involved

Disclaimer: This leaflet was compiled on the basis of personal, institutional and published experience and current British Hypertension Society Guidelines (available at <http://www.bhsoc.org>). Other recommendations may apply to individual patients.

The contents of this leaflet do not replace a consultation with the nephrologist.

Contact details

Please contact your kidney doctor (nephrologist) through the renal secretaries at Royal Preston Hospital. They can be contacted through the hospital switchboard.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk
www.nhs.uk
www.accessable.co.uk
www.patient.co.uk
www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware
<https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/>
www.kidney.org.uk

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www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.
This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

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