

	Telehealth Tools
	Obtaining Accurate Blood Pressure Readings

Blood Pressure

An individual's blood pressure varies greatly on a daily basis and requires clinical assessment when looking at trends.

The blood pressure monitor uses oscillometric technology to capture systolic & diastolic readings. This means that it senses vibrations in the blood vessel and readings may be affected by movement, diagnoses and symptoms that affect blood flow, as well as other factors.

Teach:

- Correct equipment setup. Verify appropriate cuff size and observe the patient is following instructions for cuff placement and body position.
- Instruct the client to follow proper body positioning: Rest seated 2-5 minutes, follow proper technique for cuff placement, use a bare arm extended and resting at heart level, back supported, feet flat on the floor, and legs uncrossed.

Verification Techniques

- Place the cuff on the selected arm, have client follow proper body positioning, without speaking, and without additional movement.
- Place a stethoscope over the appropriate antecubital space.
- Take a manual reading on the Honeywell monitor.
- Listen for auscultatory gap with stethoscope for systolic and diastolic readings while comparing reading on the monitor.
- Keep in mind there is room for listener sound interpretation.

Assess the following factors or conditions related to patient, device, or the procedure, which may lead to inaccurate, or inability to acquire readings:

- Is the cuff the correct size for the patient's arm?
- If using a small cuff on the A&D monitor, was the exhaust valve adjusted?
- Cuff is placed correctly on the upper arm with the arrow pointed toward the fingers, bare arm supported
- Cuff is not being placed over the sleeves of sweaters or other heavy garments
- Some medical conditions may influence the validity of the readings.
- Readings may also be affected by external factors such as anxiety, stress, caffeine, time of day, gender and age, talking during measurement, insufficient rest period, and interval between measurements as well as other factors.
- Is the tubing tangled or kinked?
- Is the patient moving or talking while attempting to take a BP reading?