

TIPS FOR CHOOSING A HOME BLOOD PRESSURE MONITOR



The American Heart Association recommends an automatic, cuff-style, bicep (upper-arm) monitor. **Wrist and finger monitors are not recommended because they yield less reliable readings.**

Here are some other tips to follow when shopping for a blood pressure monitor:

- **Choose a validated monitor.**

Make sure the monitor has been tested, validated, and approved by the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation, the British Hypertension Society and the International Protocol for the Validation of Automated BP Measuring Devices. A list of validated monitors is available on the Dabl Educational Trust website (table attached).

- **Ensure the monitor is suitable for your special needs.**

When selecting a blood pressure monitor for the elderly, pregnant women, or children; make sure it is validated for these conditions.

- **Make sure the cuff fits.**

Children and adults with smaller or larger than average-sized arms may need special-sized cuffs. They are available from medical supply companies, by direct order from companies that sell blood pressure cuffs, and in some pharmacies. The problem of “miscuffing” constitutes the most frequent error in the measurement of blood pressure. The proper cuff has a bladder length of 80% and width of at least 40% of arm circumference. Recommended cuff sizes are:

- For arm circumference of 22 – 26 cm, the cuff should be “small adult” size – 12 x 22 cm
- For arm circumference of 27 – 34 cm, the cuff should be “adult” size – 16 x 30 cm
- For arm circumference of 35 – 44 cm, the cuff should be “large adult” size – 16 x 36 cm
- For arm circumference of 45 – 52 cm, the cuff should be “adult thigh” size – 16 x 42 cm