

- If you are sitting down, do not cross your legs during the measurement.
- Patients are advised not to drive during the monitoring period, due to the risk of distraction caused by the cuff inflating.
- Avoid vigorous exercise during the monitoring period. This will help avoid exercise related spikes in your blood pressure. A gentle or brisk walk is normally fine.
- If monitoring is planned to continue at night, consider where you place the device if it is not directly attached to the cuff. This may include under a pillow, on the bed or on a bedside table.
- The device automatically stores all the readings.
- You may be asked to make a record of the time you take any prescribed medication and the time of any activities during the monitoring period.

### When will I get my results?

Your results will be discussed with you by the pharmacist or pharmacy technician at your follow-up appointment when you return the monitor. The readings will be recorded and shared with your general practice.

If, based on your results, the pharmacist or pharmacy technician feels further investigations are needed, they will advise you of this and refer you to your doctor.

### Will any other advice be provided?

The pharmacist or pharmacy technician will discuss your lifestyle/behaviours with you and provide appropriate lifestyle advice, where applicable. They may also refer or signpost you to local initiatives and services that may assist with any lifestyle changes you want to make.

### What if I have any questions or concerns?

Please contact the pharmacy if you have any questions or concerns.

# Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring (ABPM)

A guide for patients, relatives and carers

You have been recommended to be fitted with a blood pressure monitor. This leaflet will explain why and what is involved.

## What is ambulatory blood pressure monitoring?

Ambulatory blood pressure monitoring (ABPM) is when your blood pressure is automatically measured by a device at regular points as you go through your normal daily life.

## What is involved?

A cuff is worn around your upper arm and this is connected to a small digital blood pressure monitor which may be directly attached to the cuff or to a belt around your waist. The device is small and portable so it should not affect your normal daily activities.

## Why is it necessary?

A normal blood pressure check can only provide a reading for your blood pressure at that moment in time. The ABPM automatically measures your blood pressure at regular points through the day and where needed, during the night. This will provide your doctor with a clearer picture of how your blood pressure changes throughout the day and if necessary, during the night.

Some people can also get higher blood pressure readings when they are anxious about being tested. This is called 'white coat' syndrome. An ABPM helps to rule this out.

## Why do I need this monitoring?

There are several reasons why you may have been recommended to have ABPM:

- If your blood pressure was measured and was found to be high, ABPM can help your doctor to establish a diagnosis of high blood pressure (hypertension).
- If your blood pressure was higher because you were anxious when in the clinic ('white coat effect') then ABPM can help show this.
- ABPM can be used to help decide if blood pressure medication is required.
- ABPM can be used to see how well a patient's blood pressure medicines are controlling their blood pressure throughout the day and if any change needs to be made to your current medication.
- If your blood pressure has been hard to control, ABPM can help with further investigations.

- As measurements also be programmed to occur at night, ABPM can help doctors understand what happens to your blood pressure during the night.

## What can I expect at my appointment?

- The appointment will be with a pharmacist or a pharmacy technician in your pharmacy and should last about 20 minutes.
- The pharmacist or pharmacy technician will confirm you are happy to progress with the service.
- They will show you the device, set it up, explain how it works, explain how to care for it and then fit the monitor to you.
- The pharmacist or pharmacy technician will check your understanding of what has been discussed and remind you that you will need to stop any activity and rest when the cuff starts to inflate.
- They will arrange a follow up appointment to discuss the readings and to enable you to return the equipment.

## Is there anything I need to be aware of before the appointment?

- Wear loose-fitting clothes and a belt where possible.
- Take any medications you have been prescribed as normal, unless advised by your pharmacist or doctor not to.

## After the appointment, are there any additional points I need to remember?

- The ABPM device must not get wet. Therefore, baths and showers should be avoided during the monitoring period.
- The device will take measurements every 30 minutes during waking hours. If you are required to have night time monitoring as well, these measurements will be taken every 60 minutes during sleeping hours .
- You will be alerted just before the monitor is about to take a reading. When this occurs:
  - Try to sit down, if possible.
  - Position the arm that has the cuff on it at the same level as your heart and then keep your arm still.
  - If you are not able to sit down, use your other arm to support you to achieve this position.