

# Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring (ABPM)

## Patient Information - Nephrology / Cardiology

### What is Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring (ABPM)?

Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring (ABPM) is a non-invasive method of obtaining blood pressure readings over a 24-hour period.

ABPM involves wearing a blood pressure cuff around your upper non - dominant arm (for example: if you are right handed your left arm will be used). The cuff connects by a soft tube attached to a portable battery-operated device worn on a belt around your waist.

You do not need to stay in hospital and you can continue with your normal daily activities during the test.

The device is programmed to automatically measure your blood pressure every thirty minutes throughout the daytime and once an hour overnight. When a reading is taken, the blood pressure cuff will automatically inflate on your arm. All readings are recorded and stored in the portable device.

### Why do I need ABPM?

It is normal for blood pressure to change during the day. This might be because of exercise, diet, sleep, anxiety or any blood pressure tablets you may take.

As a result, a single blood pressure measured in clinic may not be an accurate or reliable reading of your blood pressure.

ABPM gives detailed information about your blood pressure trends over the course of a day

### What to expect at your appointment

Your appointment will take between 20 – 30 minutes. During your appointment the procedure will be explained, and any questions you may have will be answered. The main points to remember are that the device will automatically inflate at regular intervals over the next 24 hours. During these times, it will make a noise while it measures your blood pressure. You will need to keep your arm straight and still whilst this happens.

A nurse will wrap the blood pressure cuff around one of your arms and place the portable device on a belt around your waist.

You will be asked to return the next day for removal of the cuff and device. Removal of the cuff and monitor takes only a couple of minutes

### How should I prepare for my appointment ?

We advise that you:

- wear a short sleeved top or shirt with loose fitting sleeves so that the blood pressure cuff can be fitted comfortably.
- wear a belt if you have one so the monitor can be attached.
- take any medications as normal, unless advised otherwise.

## What should I do when a blood pressure reading is being taken?

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To allow the machine to work properly, it is important to make sure that the tube to the device is not twisted or bent.

When the machine takes a reading you should stop moving, sit down, keep your arm straight and still, whilst making sure the cuff on your arm remains at the same level as your heart. Your arm should be held slightly away from your body. This will be clearly explained and demonstrated when you come for your fitting appointment.

## Will I experience any discomfort or side-effects?

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You may experience a tingling sensation in your arm when the cuff is inflating. This will resolve when the cuff deflates. Blood pressure readings at night may disturb your sleep.

## Things to avoid

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It is important to carry on with your normal daily activities. The only thing you should not do is get the equipment wet, so you will need to avoid swimming and having a bath or shower.

## What happens after the test?

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Once you have completed the 24-hour monitoring period, the cuff and monitor are removed either by a nurse, or you will be shown how to do this yourself.

All the pressure measurements captured are then downloaded and analysed. The results are then given to the doctor who requested the test.

The results will be either discussed with you on the phone, at your next clinic visit, or through your GP.

## Where can I get more information about high blood pressure?

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Website: [Healthnavigator.org.nz](https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz)

## Contact Details

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Should you have any questions or wish to change your appointment please contact:

Nephrology department on: **03 364 0655**

Cardiology department on: **03 364 0910**