

Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring (ABPM)

Patient information - Nephrology Department

What is Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring (ABPM)?

Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring (ABPM) is when your blood pressure is measured at regular intervals, usually over a 24 hour period. It 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 to a small monitor 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 monitor is programmed to record 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 on an electronic chip in the monitor

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 reading of your blood pressure.

ABPM gives detailed information about your blood pressure

How long will the fitting take?

Fitting of the cuff and monitor takes no longer than 10 to 20 minutes. During the fitting, the procedure will be explained and any questions answered. Removal of the cuff and monitor takes only a couple of minutes, when you return the following day.

What should I wear?

It is a good idea to wear a top or shirt with loose fitting sleeves so that the blood pressure cuff can be fitted comfortably. If you have a belt, please wear it to your appointment so the monitor can be attached. A firm waist band will help support the monitor.

What should I do when a reading is being taken?

To allow the machine to work properly, it is important to make sure that the tube to the machine is not twisted or bent. When the machine takes a reading you should stop moving, sit down, keep your arm still and relaxed, whilst making sure the cuff on your arm remains at the same level as your heart. Your arm should be slightly away from your body.

Is it safe?

ABPM is safe, though some people report discomfort when the cuff is inflating. Blood pressure readings at night may disturb sleep.

Things to avoid

It is important to carry on with your normal routine and do all the things you would normally do. The only things you should avoid doing for the day are swimming and having a bath or shower.

What happens to the readings when I complete the 24 hours?

Once you have completed the 24 hour monitoring period the cuff and monitor are removed. All the information recorded on the electronic chip in the monitor will be loaded onto a computer and printed out. This information gives the doctor a detailed picture of your blood pressure.

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?

Website: <http://www.healthinfo.org.nz/>

Contact Details

Should you have any questions or wish to change your appointment please contact the nephrology department on: 03 364 0655

For more information about:

- your health and medication, go to www.healthinfo.org.nz
- hospital and specialist services, go to www.cdhb.health.nz