

# 8 STEPS TO ACCURATELY MEASURE BLOOD PRESSURE (BP)

1 Have client sit quietly for 5 minutes

2 Ask client to empty bladder  
(A full bladder adds 10 mm Hg)

3 Pause conversation  
(Talking adds 10 mm Hg)

4 Support client's arm at heart level  
(An unsupported arm adds 10 mm Hg)

5 Put BP cuff on client's bare arm  
(A cuff over clothing adds 5–50 mm Hg)

6 Make sure client uncrosses legs  
(Crossed legs add 2–8 mm Hg)

7 If BP is elevated, take the average of 2 readings 5 minutes apart

8 Discuss BP reading with client and document in the health record

## AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION BLOOD PRESSURE RANGES

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC MM HG (UPPER NUMBER)		DIASTOLIC MM HG (LOWER NUMBER)
Normal	Less than 120	and	Less than 80
Elevated	120–129	and	Less than 80
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension Stage 1)	130–139	or	80–89
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension Stage 2)	140 or higher	or	90 or higher
Hypertension Crisis	Higher than 180	and/or	Higher than 120

SOURCES: Pickering, et al., (2005), *Circulation*; O'Brien, et al., (2003), *Journal of Hypertension*; American Heart Association, (2018), [heart.org/bptools](http://heart.org/bptools)

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