



**Video Transcript:** Accurate Measurement of Blood Pressure in a Reproductive Health Setting

**Narrator:** Accurate measurement of blood pressure in a reproductive health setting.

A production of the Reproductive Health National Training Center. R-H-N-T-C

Accurate measurement of blood pressure is essential to be able to identify, and intervene, when blood pressure is high.

Almost half of U.S. adults have hypertension — defined as a blood pressure of greater than 130 over 80. Hypertension is a major risk factor for heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, pregnancy complications, and can affect reproductive health.

Accurate blood pressure measurement is particularly important for family planning providers because hypertension is one of the leading — and most preventable — contributors to maternal morbidity and mortality. And, having an accurate blood pressure measurement is important in determining the contraceptive options for which a client is medically eligible.

To accurately measure blood pressure, remember B-P-M. Before, Position, Measure.

**Before.** Before taking the blood pressure, ask the client to empty their bladder. Have them sit quietly for 5 minutes. Then select the appropriate size cuff. It is important to select a cuff that is large enough. The blood pressure measurement is more likely to be wrong, if the cuff is too small than if it is too large.

**Position.** Position the client. Make sure they are seated comfortably with their back supported and legs uncrossed. Support their arm at heart level. Put the appropriate sized blood pressure cuff on their bare arm. The cuff bladder should encircle at least eighty percent of the arm circumference. Pause conversation.

Whether using an automated or manual device, the recommendations for positioning are the same. Each of these recommendations are made because they can significantly impact the blood pressure measurement by between 5 and 50 millimeters of mercury.

**Measurement.** After taking the blood pressure measurement, discuss the result with the client, and document it in their record. If the blood pressure is elevated, wait five minutes; repeat the blood pressure reading and take the average of two readings. Use a trusted Blood Pressure Ranges table as a reference for normal, elevated, and high blood pressure categories.

Remember B-P-M. Before, Position, Measure

For more information, and to find related resources, go to [R-H-N-T-C.org](http://R-H-N-T-C.org)