Blood pressure self-monitoring involves checking your blood pressure and heart rate at home and keeping a log of your blood pressures. You should share your readings with your doctor, especially if they are high or low, so they can better manage your condition. Anyone who has been diagnosed with high blood pressure or advised by a doctor or medical professional should self-monitor their blood pressures.

Why should I do it?
Blood pressure self-monitoring allows you to take an active role in improving your health. It gives your doctor information about the effectiveness of your medication and lifestyle changes at lowering your blood pressure. If your blood pressure is not in a normal range, your doctor may change your medications. Because most people are unaware when their blood pressure is high, having a regular schedule for monitoring your blood pressure can help you know when you need to see a doctor or call 9-1-1.

Contact your doctor immediately if your blood pressure is higher than 180/120 mmHg.

When do I do it?
You should check your blood pressure twice a day, in the morning before medications and then in the evening. Every time, you should record two blood pressures each one minute apart.

1-2-3 Let’s Check Your BP

Don’t smoke, exercise or drink caffeinated beverages or alcohol 30 minutes before you take your blood pressure.

1. Place your blood pressure cuff above your elbow, not over clothing, and rest your arm on a flat surface so your upper arm is even with your heart.

2. Sit quietly without talking for 5 minutes with your back against a chair and your feet flat on the ground.

3. Check and record your blood pressure reading.

Repeat your blood pressure after 1 minute has passed and record both readings.

Talk with your doctor about the goal for your blood pressures and how often to check your blood pressure. Report high or low blood pressures and heart rates to your doctor. Take your blood pressure machine with you to your appointments to make sure the machine is working correctly.

heart.org/bplevels