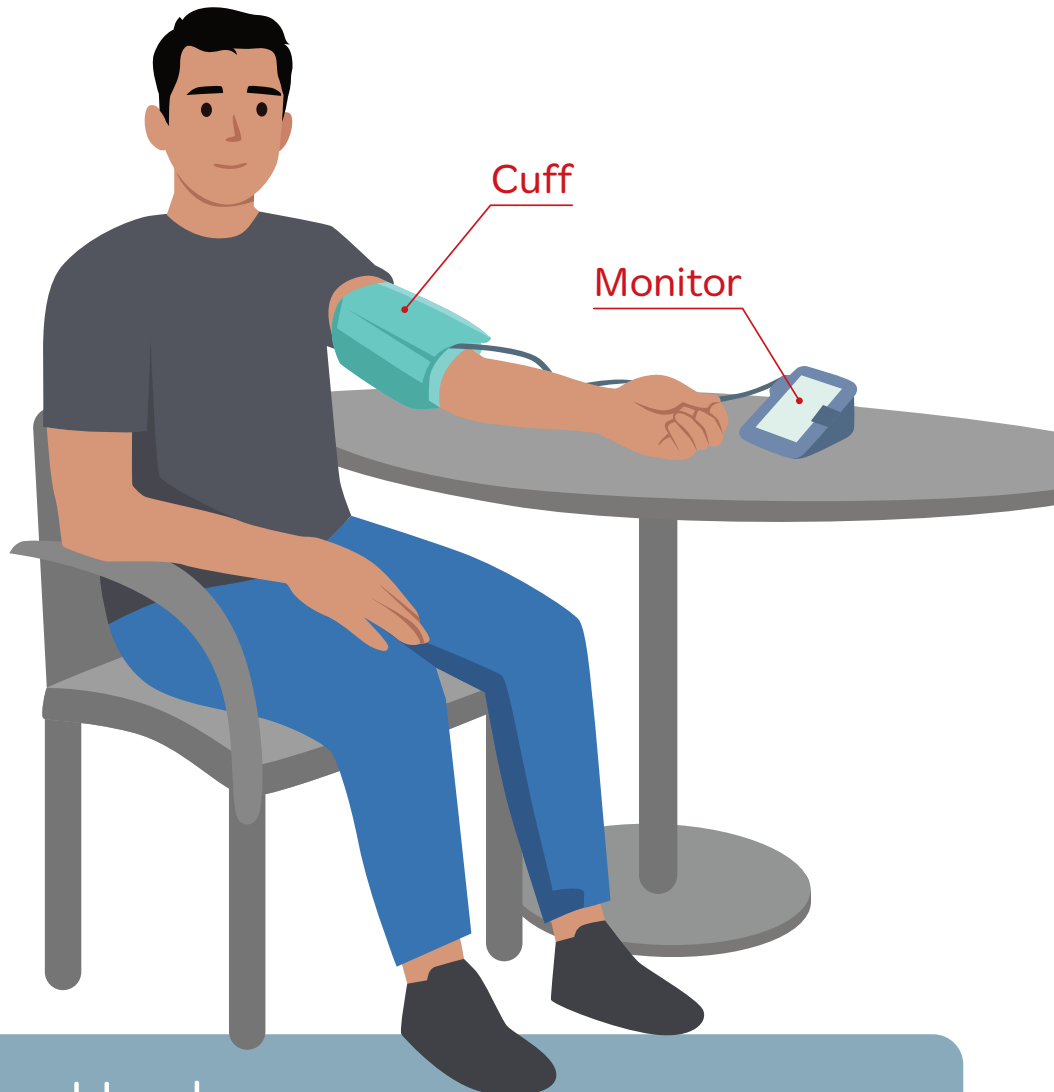


# Check your blood pressure at home

Follow these steps for an accurate reading

- 1 Do not exercise, smoke, drink alcohol or caffeinated drinks for **30 minutes beforehand**.
- 2 Go to the toilet if you need to. A full bladder can affect your reading.
- 3 Check you have the correct cuff size. If it's too big or too small, your reading may be wrong.
- 4 Put the blood pressure monitor on the table next to you. Use the same arm every time you measure your blood pressure.
- 5 Plug the cuff into the monitor.
- 6 Relax for at least **5 minutes** in an upright chair with back support. Keep both feet flat on the floor.
- 7 Place the cuff on bare skin on your upper arm. The bottom of the cuff should be two finger widths (2-4cms) above the bend of your elbow.
- 8 Rest your arm on the table, so the cuff is at heart level. Relax your hand, stay still and do not talk.
- 9 Take two readings 1 minute apart. Write down both results.



## When to take your blood pressure

**Morning:** Before you have breakfast or take any medication.

**Evening:** After taking medication and before bed.

# What do my numbers mean?

Blood pressure is measured in millimetres of mercury (which is written as mmHg).

A blood pressure reading has two numbers and is written as a figure, like 120/80 (this is said '120 over 80').

The first (top) number is the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats (systolic pressure). The second (bottom) number is the pressure in your arteries when your heart relaxes (diastolic pressure).

## Blood pressure ranges

Blood pressure	Top number (systolic)	Bottom number (diastolic)
Low	Less than 90	Less than 60
Ideal	Less than 120	Less than 80
Normal	120–129	80–84
Normal to high	130–139	85–89
High	Above 140	Above 90



Scan the QR code with your phone camera to get a printable blood pressure logbook. Use it to write down your readings.

### More information

For more information about blood pressure visit: [heartfoundation.org.nz/blood-pressure](https://heartfoundation.org.nz/blood-pressure)

