

# Ambulatory Blood Pressure Test

Information and advice for patients

## Cardiology Diagnostics

### What is an Ambulatory Blood Pressure (BP) Test?

An ambulatory BP test is a small device consisting of a blood pressure monitor connected to a BP cuff. The cuff is worn around your upper arm. It is given to you for a day to record your blood pressure at set intervals for 24 hours.

### What is the benefit of the test?

This test allows your doctor to see if there is any variation in your blood pressure during the day and night. It is often done to evaluate changes due to normal daily routine activities or during stressful periods, compared with clinic readings which may be higher than normal, and often to evaluate correct performance of your medication.

### What are the risks of the test?

There are no risks although you might find it a little uncomfortable when the blood pressure cuff inflates whilst taking the reading.

### What are the risks of not having the test?

If you choose not to have the ambulatory blood pressure test this may delay your doctor finding out what is causing your symptoms and starting treatment.

### Are there any alternative tests?

There are no alternatives to this test that will give your doctor the information they need.

### Preparing for the test

Wear clothes that allow easy access to your upper arms i.e. a short sleeve top.

### During the test

This procedure should take approximately 15 minutes. However, times may vary.

A cardiographer or cardiac physiologist (they can be either male or female members of staff) will need access to your non-dominant arm, to attach a blood pressure cuff around your upper arm. You will need to wear clothing with loose sleeves to allow the cuff to fit under them. This has a long tube attached which will be hidden under your clothing and is connected to the BP monitor. A blood pressure reading is recorded to check the machine works accurately. If this is OK, the machine, which has been programmed with all your details and correct settings, is then placed in a small pouch and secured to your body using a strap around the waist or shoulder.

Advice will be given with regard to the best position of the recorder for comfort especially when sleeping. You will then be free to leave the department.

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### What do I feel during the test?

The machine will be programmed to take your BP at regular intervals, usually half hourly during the day, and hourly during the night. Just before each reading, a short beep will sound to alert you. When your BP is being taken, please relax your arm by your side and limit movement as much as possible. The machine will try again if it can't get a good reading first time.

Please be advised that the blood pressure cuff may inflate tightly. If the pressure becomes painful or your arm shows any bruising remove the cuff immediately.

You will be given a patient diary sheet, where you will be asked to record your any daily activities (including exercise), medication times, sleeping patterns, and symptoms. Whilst wearing the machine, try to do your normal daily activities as much as possible because the doctor will want to see what happens to your BP on a typical day.

### After the test (usually the following day)

We will ask you to return the equipment and diary to us on the next working day. The staff will advise you how to return the equipment.

### When will I get the results?

You won't get the results straight after the test we need time to analyse them. A full report will be sent to the doctor who referred you for the test within 2 weeks and they will contact or write to you with the results.

### Contact details

You will be able to ask any questions or tell us any concerns before the test is carried out but if you would like to contact us before your appointment please call us on

Tel: 0121 507 6295 - Birmingham Treatment Centre

Tel: 0121 507 3512 - Sandwell General Hospital

Monday to Friday, 9:00am – 4:00pm

### Suggestions

In order to continually improve our service we welcome your feedback and suggestions. We would be grateful if you would complete our Friends and Family survey at the end of your appointment.

### Complaints

If you have any complaints about the treatment you have received, please ask at reception to see the Head of Department. Alternatively you can contact, Informal Concern or the complaints department.

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### Informal Concern

Telephone: 0121 507 5836

Lines open: 10am till 4pm Monday to Friday

Email: [swb-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:swb-tr.pals@nhs.net)

### Complaints

Telephone: 0121 507 4080 or 0121 507 5892 or 0121 507 6440

Lines open: 10am till 4pm Monday to Friday

Email: [swbh.complaints@nhs.net](mailto:swbh.complaints@nhs.net)

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our website [www.swbh.nhs.uk](http://www.swbh.nhs.uk), follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and like us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs](http://www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs).

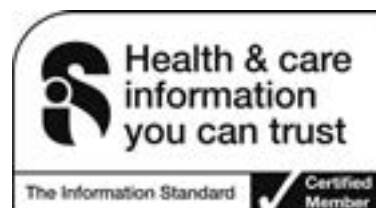
## Sources used for the information in this leaflet

National Health Service (2023) *Blood Pressure Test*. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/blood-pressure-test/> [Accessed 26 October 2023].



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