

Figure 3: Important points about self/home blood pressure monitoring

Considerations when purchasing a monitor:

- The cost of the monitor is usually between \$80-140.
- Choose a device that meets the standards of the Association for Advancement of Medical Instrumentation (AAMI), the British Hypertension Society (BHS) or International Protocol (IP). Look for this trademark symbol* on the package.



*Endorsed by the Canadian Coalition for the Prevention and Control of Hypertension

- Choose the right cuff size – the bladder of the cuff should cover 80% of the upper arm.
- To increase the reliability of reported self/home blood pressure values, purchase devices that automatically record data.
- Ask a healthcare professional if you require assistance.

Important points about measuring blood pressure at home:

- Clients should read the instructions that come with the monitor carefully.
- Clients should be observed to ensure that blood pressure is measured correctly. Inform clients of the following:
 - No smoking or nicotine 15-30 minutes before taking blood pressure.
 - No caffeinated beverages one hour before taking blood pressure.
 - Rest for 5 minutes before taking blood pressure.
 - Sit up straight with the back supported. The arm should be supported so the elbow is just below heart level.
 - Never cross the legs when measuring blood pressure.
 - Do not talk while measuring blood pressure.
 - Check blood pressure twice in the morning (before taking medications) and twice in the evening for seven consecutive days.
 - Bring blood pressure device and record with you to your next appointment.
- Stable, normotensive clients should check blood pressures for a one-week period every 3 months. Persons with diabetes, or clients having difficulty following a treatment plan, should check their blood pressure more frequently.
- Home monitors should be checked annually against a device of known calibration. This would require a visit to the clinic to have a blood pressure check using the home equipment and calibrated clinic equipment for the purposes of comparison.
- Self/home BP values $\geq 135/85$ mmHg should be considered elevated and associated with increased overall mortality risk similar to clinic readings $>140/90$ mmHg. In an asymptomatic client, a blood pressure $>200/130$ mmHg is a medical emergency and the client should seek immediate medical attention.

CHEP, 2004; HSFOb, 2005

Refer to *Appendix F* for a client education resource regarding the selection and use of a home blood pressure monitor.