



Knowledge and Skills in Heart Healthcare



Do we take our blood pressure taking skills for granted?

Blood pressure is an important modifiable risk factor for cardiovascular and kidney disease making blood pressure taking an important skill in everyday practice.

Skill Check

1. Blood pressure deviation factors include room temperature, exercise, alcohol, nicotine, arm positioning, muscle tension, bladder distension, talking, back ground noise.
2. Individual should be seated, legs uncrossed, relaxed, not talking, back and arm supported so cuff is at heart level and covering at least 80%* of the arm, no clothes between cuff and arm or restricting the arm.
3. Take 1st blood pressure reading after 10 minutes sitting, take 2nd reading 2-5 minutes after, use the average of the two
4. Blood pressure should be checked in both arms at the first examination, when there is a consistent difference, the arm with the higher pressure should be used.
5. Home based measurements are generally lower the NZ Primary Care Handbook 2012 suggest that treatment should be based predominantly on office based measurements.

*Error in blood pressure is most frequently due to “miss cuffing” with “under cuffing” large arms accounting for most errors BPAC. (2013). Hypertension in adults: The silent killer. BPAC; 54, 23- 32. Retrieved from <http://www.bpac.org.nz/BPJ/2013/August/hypertension.aspx>

Take a closer look

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tB8nISCEcs8&list=PL595A711C9A756527>

What do you think? What has he missed? Can you find a better video? Could you produce a better video?

Supporting people who have hypertension

1. Understanding their condition and cardiovascular combined risk estimate
2. Gauging their thoughts and feelings
3. Explaining option and choices
4. Goal setting and support
5. Following up- is there a system? Who does what?

