

# *Southern Indiana Nephrology and Hypertension*

## **Home Blood Pressure Monitoring**

Blood pressure is a measurement of the pressure created in your blood vessels. It is dependent on the strength of your heart's contraction and also on the stiffness of your blood vessels. When your heart squeezes it generates a high pressure, known as the systolic pressure, which is the "top" number that is measured. Your blood vessels ideally relax at the same time, absorbing some of that pressure. As your heart relaxes, your blood vessels then squeeze a small extent themselves, creating the "lower" number, or the diastolic pressure.

Blood pressure may be elevated in the office but normal at home in about 15% of people. This is known as "white-coat" hypertension. Interestingly, blood pressure can be normal in the office but high at home, known as "masked" hypertension. Getting an accurate reading of your blood pressure and keeping it under good control is one of the most important ways to stay healthy.

Elevated blood pressure is one of the leading causes of stroke, heart disease and kidney problems. Your risk for these doubles as the systolic increases by 20 points or the diastolic increases by 10. If you only have high blood pressure but no other problems, your goal is to have the majority of readings less than 140/90. If you have diabetes, heart or blood vessel disease, or kidney disease, then your blood pressure should be less than 130/80.

To help us get your blood pressure to these goals, we would like you to monitor your blood pressure at home. If you already have a monitor, please bring it in so we can check its accuracy. If you do not have one yet, we recommend getting an upper arm digital monitor. The Reli-On at Walmart seems to do very well. Even if you buy a new one, we would like to check it for accuracy.

Blood pressure can vary, depending on what you are doing. Do not smoke for 15 minutes before checking. Empty your bladder before checking. We recommend checking it after 5 minutes of rest, with your feet flat on the floor, and your arm supported by a table at heart level. Check it once, write down the reading and then wait one minute, check it again and record this also. We would like you to check it twice in the morning and twice in the evening, at least for the week before your next appointment. You can record it on the back of this sheet, or in a notebook or calendar. **PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR SHEET IN TO THE NEXT VISIT!!!**

