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STREATHAM PARK SURGERY

**AMBULATORY BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORING (ABPM)**

**Patient Information Leaflet**

**YOU HAVE BEEN ASKED TO HAVE AN AMBULATORY BLOOD PRESSURE MONITOR (ABPM) FOR 24 HOURS.**

This leaflet is designed to help you understand about ambulatory blood pressure monitoring. If after reading this leaflet you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask the nurse or doctor or technician caring for you.

**WHAT IS AMBULATORY BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORING (ABPM)?**

ABPM is a means of measuring blood pressure (BP) over a 24-hour period. This involves wearing a monitor, which consists of a cuff, similar to one used by your GP when he records your BP, which is worn around your upper arm. This is attached via a rubber tube to the monitor, which is a ’box’ worn on a belt around your waist.

**WHY IS IT NECESSARY/WHAT WILL IT SHOW?**

It is quite common for BP recordings to be higher when taken in a doctor’s surgery or a hospital environment. The monitor is a very effective way of observing your BP in your normal/usual surroundings i.e. at work, relaxing at home and asleep in bed.

**WHAT DO I NEED TO DO BEFORE I GO TO MY APPOINTMENT FOR THE TEST?**

You will need to wear a loose fitting top that you can take off and put on easily,

It will be best to have a shower or bath before you are fitted with the monitor, as you will not be able to bathe for 24 hours whilst you are fitted with the monitor.

Please remember to take the referral form with you for the appointment, or the test will have to be cancelled.

**DO I NEED TO WEAR IT FOR 24 HOURS?**

Ideally, you should wear the monitor for 24 hours but sometimes this isn’t possible. However, any readings obtained are valuable.

**CAN I TAKE THE MONITOR OFF?**

You can remove the cuff at the end of the 24-hour period, after you have pressed ‘Stop ‘on the monitor.

It should not be removed if possible, during the 24-hour monitoring period. If you do need to remove the cuff during the 24-hour period to remove clothing, it is important that the cuff is put back on properly, with the arrow and “ART” on the artery as soon as possible.

**IS IT PAINFUL?**

No, it is not a painful procedure but some people do find it mildly uncomfortable for the short period of time that it takes the cuff to inflate and measure the BP. When the reading is being taken, avoid moving your arm or hand and try to relax.

Some people may experience slight hand swelling or slight bruising under the cuff. This is not serious and will disappear once the cuff is removed

**HOW OFTEN WILL IT TAKE MY BLOOD PRESSURE?**

The monitor will measure your BP every 30 minutes during the day and every hour at night. You may be aware of the cuff inflating overnight.

During the day the machine will give 2 beeps to warn you that it is about to take your BP and 1 beep to indicate the reading has finished.

**DO I NEED TO WRITE ANYTHING DOWN?**

You will be asked to complete a ‘diary’ whilst wearing the monitor, giving your GP an idea of your main activities during the 24-hours e.g. sleeping, eating, exercise etc. You will need to take your diary back to your own GP when you have a follow up appointment with him for your results of this test.

**CAN I CARRY ON AS NORMAL WHILST WEARING THE MONITOR?**

Yes, this should be as normal a day as possible for you.

**DO I HAVE TO DO ANYTHING SPECIAL?**

The monitor takes the blood pressure reading by measuring the pulse in your arm. It is very important that you keep your arm as relaxed and still as possible when the machine is taking the reading and avoid resting your arm on anything vibrating, such as the door of a moving vehicle. Any external vibrations can mask the pulse measurement, resulting in error readings.'

If there is too much movement in the arm or hand whilst this is happening the machine will be unable to measure your BP and will give a short series of beeps and display an error code on the screen. If this happens the machine will automatically try again a minute later.

If you have any symptoms i.e. palpitations or dizziness etc, please press the event button and then the start button on the monitor.. The monitor will then take another blood pressure reading. You will also need to record your symptoms in the diary

If you are not resting (i.e. running for a bus) when a blood pressure reading is being taken, please press the ‘event button’ on the monitor. The nurse will explain this to you.

If the monitor is getting continuous error codes, check all connections are secure. If this does not work and it is during normal surgery hours, you can ring the nurse who fitted the monitor for advice. If this happens after normal surgery hours (at night), turn the machine off and take the cuff off and contact the surgery the next morning.

Try to avoid using the monitor around a microwave that is on, as the radio waves from the microwave may interfere with the blood pressure monitor

**CAN I BATHE/SHOWER WHILST WEARING THE MONITOR?**

**NO** because water will damage the monitor. It would be appropriate to take a shower or bath before you have the monitor fitted.

**CAN I DRIVE WHILST WEARING THE MONITOR?**

Yes, although it can be a little inconvenient. If the monitor takes a reading whilst driving, arm movement such as changing gears may cause the monitor to register an error code. If you are in a position to do so it is better to stop the car and be still while the reading is taken.

**WHERE DO I PUT THE MONITOR WHEN GOING TO BED?**

When sleeping, place the monitor inside a pillow and place the pillow in bed with you. Do not place the monitor on the nightstand.

**WHAT DO I DO IN AN EMERGENCY?**

The “STOP/START” button may be used to stop a reading in an emergency.

Switching the unit Off by pressing the On/Off button will cause the cuff to deflate immediately. The monitor can be switched back on at any time and the measurements will begin again automatically.'

**IS THERE A NUMBER TO RING IF I AM WORRIED WHILST WEARING THE MONITOR?**

Between 9am and 6pm, you can ring the surgery where you were fitted with the monitor

**HOW DO I GET MY RESULTS?**

Your results will either be given to you when you return the monitor, to take back to your GP or they will be sent to him within 2 working days. You will need to book an appointment with your own GP to discuss the results. Don’t forget to take the ‘diary ‘with you, for this appointment.

**IMPORTANT**

**It is essential that you return the monitor to the surgery that fitted you it, the next working day**