

Ambulatory blood pressure monitoring (ABPM)

What is ambulatory blood pressure monitoring (ABPM)?

ABPM measures your child's blood pressure (BP) many times over 24 hours while they are at home.

Why do we do ABPM?

ABPM is a good way to check for high BP (hypertension) at home. It is better than checking in clinic because some children get nervous during their clinic visit.

How does ABPM happen?

Your child will wear an ABPM device for 24 hours.

- The device includes a BP cuff and a small monitor that is about the size of a large cell phone. The monitor is worn on the belt or a pouch that hangs over your child's shoulder. It connects to the BP cuff.
- The BP cuff is placed on your child's non-dominant arm (this would be the left arm if your child is right-handed).
- The ABPM device checks and records BP about every 20 minutes during the day and every 30 minutes at night.
- Your child should not move their arm when the device checks their BP. The device may check the BP a second time in 2 minutes if the device was not able to check the BP the first time.
- You will not see your child's BP on the monitor screen.



In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

ABPM, continued

How does my child get an ABPM device?

Sometimes, we have an ABPM device in clinic so it can be started right away. If not, the nurse will schedule another clinic visit.

During the visit, the nurse will put the BP cuff on your child's arm and connect it to the monitor. The nurse will then start the device, and it will start measuring your child's BP. It will stop 24 hours later. Do not touch any buttons on the monitor.

What do I need to do during ABPM?

Write down what your child is doing on the activity sheet the care team gives you.

- It is most important that you write down when your child falls asleep and when your child wakes up.
- You should also write down if your child is exercising (when started and when ended).

At night, your child can take off the shoulder strap and place the device next to them or under their pillow in bed.

What activities should my child avoid?

Your child should not:

- Bathe, shower or swim during ABPM. The device should not get wet.
- Play contact sports, such as football or soccer.

What activities should my child limit?

Many things can cause BP to rise. This includes exercise, sports and videogames. Try to limit these activities during ABPM and encourage light activities instead.

Stress can also cause BP to rise. Talk with the doctor if your child has any stressors that may affect them during ABPM.

Can I remove the device before ABPM ends?

Most children are able to complete ABPM without problems. Some reasons to remove the device include:

- Your child has a lot of discomfort when the BP cuff fills with air and it does not go away, even after changing cuff position.
- The device checks your child's BP more often than every 20 minutes. It may not be working right.

Call the clinic if your child is having problems or cannot tolerate the device.

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ABPM, continued

What happens after ABPM?

Take the ABPM device off your child after 24 hours. Remove and discard the batteries. Return the device and completed activity sheet:

- By mailing them to the clinic. Use the self-addressed envelope or package the care team gives you in the clinic, **OR**
- By taking them to the clinic. Tell the front desk staff member that you are returning the device.

Please mail or return the monitor within 24 hours of the test ending. There is a limited number of monitors, and other children are waiting to get their ABPM test.

When do I get the results?

Your child's nephrologist (kidney doctor) will review the results and let you know what it shows. This may take up to 2 weeks. Contact the clinic by phone or MyChart if it has been longer than 2 weeks and you have not heard about the results.

Who should I call if I have questions?

Call 404-785-KIDS (5437) if you have questions. Let them know whether you need to talk with a care team member from the kidney transplant clinic or the nephrology clinic.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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