

# BP measurement skills assessment



Excellent blood pressure (BP) measurement technique requires training and skills, but a few common problems related to patient preparation and positioning often account for unreliable BP measurements.<sup>1</sup> Use this tool to verify everyone in your practice or health center obtains BP measurements the right way every time. This tool is not designed to assess individual competence. Instead, it will help detect systemic issues that may be resulting in the routine use of improper technique.

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete four observations for each team member (e.g., medical assistant, nursing staff and physicians) who regularly takes BP measurements. Repeat quarterly, monthly or as needed.

Site name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Team member measuring BP name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Observation location (clinic, unit, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Team member auditing BP measurement name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

	Patient No. 1			Patient No. 2			Patient No. 3			Patient No. 4		
<b>BP measurement device used</b>	Yes	No	Comments									
Manual device	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Automated devices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
<b>Patient preparation and positioning</b>	Yes	No	If no, why not?	Yes	No	If no, why not?	Yes	No	If no, why not?	Yes	No	If no, why not?
Asked patient if bladder is full, and if yes, instructed to use the bathroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Patient rested for 3-5 minutes prior to taking initial BP measurement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Assessed for recent exercise, tobacco, caffeine or stimulant use and documented in EHR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Seated with back supported	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Feet flat on floor or supported on a firm surface	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Legs uncrossed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Appropriate cuff size used	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Cuff placed over bare upper arm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Arm supported with middle of cuff at heart level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
No one talked during measurement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Initial BP documented in EHR vitals field	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
<b>Confirmatory BP:</b> If the initial BP was high, confirmatory BP measurement(s) should be performed and documented in the patient's EHR.	Yes	No	If no, why not?	Yes	No	If no, why not?	Yes	No	If no, why not?	Yes	No	If no, why not?
Two or three confirmatory BP measurements were performed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Patient rested quietly for 1-2 minutes between each repeat measurement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
All repeat BP measurements were averaged (one average systolic and one average diastolic) and documented in the EHR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										

This resource is part of AMA MAP BP™, a quality improvement program. Using a single or subset of AMA MAP BP tools or resources does not constitute implementing this program. AMA MAP BP includes guidance from AMA hypertension experts and has been shown to improve BP control rates by 10 percentage points and sustain results.

This skills assessment was adapted with permission of the American Medical Association and The Johns Hopkins University. The original copyrighted content can be found at <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/hypertension/ama-johns-hopkins-blood-pressure-control-resources>.

1. Muntner P, Shimbo D, Carey RM, et al. Measurement of Blood Pressure in Humans: A Scientific Statement From the American Heart Association. *Hypertension*. 2019;73(5). doi:10.1161/hyp.0000000000000087.