BLOOD PRESSURE AFTER 65

Six checks on how blood pressure is read and treated, from Episode 7.

WHAT THE STUDIES FOUND

☐ 6	**How you take the reading**	In 133 adults, the top number read 3.9 points higher with the hand in the lap and 6.5 points higher with the arm at the side, compared with the arm resting on a desk. *(Liu et al., JAMA Internal Medicine, 2024)*
☐ 5	**Home vs the doctor's office**	In 59,124 patients followed for about 10 years, people whose readings were normal at the office but high outside it had a 24% higher risk of death. *(Staplin et al., The Lancet, 2023)*
☐ 4	**The bottom number**	In the SPRINT trial, aiming the top number under 120 instead of 140 cut serious heart problems about as much in people with the lowest bottom numbers (average 61) as in everyone else. *(Beddhu et al., Circulation, 2018)*
☐ 3	**The top number after 65**	In 2,636 adults 75 and older, aiming under 120 instead of 140 meant 34% fewer major heart events (102 against 148) and 33% fewer deaths (73 against 107). *(Williamson et al., JAMA, 2016)*
☐ 2	**The drop when you stand up**	In 5,007 adults 65 and older, feeling dizzy on standing went with a 32% higher risk of dementia and a 22% higher risk of stroke. *(Juraschek et al., Neurology, 2020)*
☐ 1	**Left arm vs right arm**	When 20 studies were pooled, a gap of 15 points or more in the top number between the two arms went with 1.6 times the risk of death from any cause. *(Clark et al., The Lancet, 2012)*

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

- ☐ Is my arm position right, and is my cuff the right size?
- ☐ Would a 24-hour monitor make sense for me?
- ☐ If my bottom number is under 60, what does that mean?
- ☐ What top-number target are you using for me, and why?
- ☐ Could you check my blood pressure after I stand up?
- ☐ Which arm should I use, and is there a gap between them?

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Findings from published studies, not a treatment plan. Informational and educational only, not medical advice. Talk to your doctor before you change your medications, diet, exercise, or health routine.