

Organising Community Blood Pressure Checking Activities Points to Note

1. Preface

Routine blood pressure checking helps early detection of hypertension. It also provides a useful baseline record for people with normal blood pressure. To achieve the above results, there should be accurate measurement and appropriate follow-up actions. Community groups need to carefully plan their blood pressure checking activities so as to deliver services effectively.

The following notes serve as a general reference for organising community blood pressure checking activities. For arrangement of individual activity, please consult healthcare professionals for advice to safeguard clients' safety and interests.

2. Before the activity of blood pressure checking

2.1 Understand the purpose of blood pressure checking

- Routine blood pressure checking helps early detection of hypertension. With early and proper treatment, patients with hypertension can have their blood pressure under control earlier, which would in turn reduce the risk of developing complications. To achieve the above results, the blood pressure needs to be measured accurately, and with appropriate follow-up actions arranged. If necessary, the patients should be referred to a family doctor for further assessment, investigation and treatment
- Inappropriate measurement of blood pressure may lead to misdiagnosis, including false positive (abnormal result in a normal client) or false negative (normal result in a hypertensive patient). False positive situation will cause unnecessary worry for the normal clients while false negative result may delay treatment for the hypertensive patients

2.2 Arrange a suitable venue

- Provide a quiet place, assuring privacy for measuring blood pressure
- The venue should be spacious enough to allow clients to rest before checking blood pressure

2.3 Arrange suitable equipment

- Provide stable tables of appropriate height for placing the blood pressure monitor and chairs for clients to sit
- Select reliable, accurate and calibrated blood pressure monitors with proper maintenance
- For digital blood pressure monitors, prefer to use upper arm devices as they are more accurate. Wrist monitors may be used by people for whom a large upper arm cuff is too small or cannot be used because of shape or pain from the pressure of the cuff when it inflates. Devices that measure blood pressure at the finger are not recommended

2.4 Arrange suitable manpower

- Although blood pressure checking will not cause harm to our body, it should be carried out by trained personnel to ensure proper checking and appropriate follow-up advice will be given

3. During the activity of blood pressure checking

3.1 Ensure the clients understand the purpose and limitation of the blood pressure checking. If possible, arrange a healthcare professional to provide information on hypertension beforehand

3.2 Arrange trained personnel to do the blood pressure checking

3.3 Right before checking the blood pressure, remind the clients :

- To avoid doing exercise, drinking coffee or tea half an hour before blood pressure check
- To go to the toilet if needed to avoid having urges
- To wear loose-fitting clothes
- To rest and relax for 5 minutes before the check

3.4 After checking the blood pressure:

- Record the date and blood pressure reading, provide correct interpretation of the result as well as advice, and arrange appropriate follow up care
- Advise healthy adults with normal reading to recheck blood pressure at least once every 2 years. It is equally important to encourage them to adopt a healthy lifestyle so as to reduce the risk of getting hypertension
- Advise people with abnormal reading to consult their family doctors for further assessment, investigation and treatment. Also encourage lifestyle modifications which include healthy eating, regular exercise, refraining from tobacco and alcohol as well as keeping a relaxed mood
- A single reading on the high side does not signify a diagnosis of high blood pressure. To allay client's worry, recheck blood pressure after a short break and if necessary, advise client to consult his/her family doctor. To find a family doctor, advise clients to visit the Primary Care Directory website (<http://www.pcdirectory.gov.hk>) of the Department of Health

4. Conclusion

In general, although organising blood pressure checking activities appears to be simple, the procedures should be conducted by trained personnel to ensure proper measurement and appropriate follow-up actions. Moreover, organisers may consider collaborating with medical institutions to achieve a synergistic effect and at the same time to ensure a professional standard of blood pressure measurement service.

To prevent hypertension,
adopting a healthy lifestyle is as important as checking blood pressure regularly.

Please consult your family doctor if in doubt.

Frequently asked questions of blood pressure checking
(http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/28272.html)

Reference

1. Hong Kong Reference Framework for Hypertension Care for Adults in Primary Care Setting
http://www.fhb.gov.hk/.../download/press_and_publications/otherinfo/101231_primary_care/e_hypertension_care.pdf
2. Hong Kong Reference Framework for Hypertension Care for Adults in Primary Care Settings
【Patient Version】
http://www.fhb.gov.hk/.../press_and_publications/otherinfo/101231_primary_care/e_hypertension_care_patient.pdf
3. Blood Pressure Monitor
http://www.mdco.gov.hk/english/emp/emp_hp/files/Blood_Pressure_Monitor_eng.pdf