

I am a retired lady aged 63 and suffer from White Coat Hypertension. This affects me by my having very elevated blood pressures when I present at the surgery, but when monitored at home, the levels are relatively normal. Over the past two to three years, at each visit to the surgery, my blood pressure levels have caused increasing concern. When I recently attended the surgery my blood pressure reading was 166/88. As I have my own Blood Pressure Arm Monitor, the Practice Nurse requested that I monitor my blood pressure levels at home for a week. The Blood Pressure Arm Monitors are readily available from a High Street chain of chemists and probably from smaller, local chemists too. They are quite easy to use and if anyone is considering obtaining one, probably the Practice Nurse will be able to show you how to use it, if you consult with her first and make a subsequent appointment. It would probably be wiser first to see if home monitoring is suitable for you by contacting your doctor or practice nurse before you make the initial decision.

The actual process of monitoring requires you to take two readings in the mornings and two in the evenings of each day and you will need to record the results. At the end of the week, the results are returned to the Practice Nurse, who will work out the average of the week and the number she comes up with will be your blood pressure.

After I completed the week's readings, I felt that the blood pressure I presented with was still higher than my normal as I had completed the monitoring whilst still feeling under some pressure – the result was 138/79. After I submitted the results to the nurse, a few days later, I decided to repeat another week's readings for my own benefit when I wasn't under pressure. This time the results were 130/73.

I had an appointment to discuss my blood pressure results with Dr Hannan and was able to present him with my latest blood pressure results that I had done using my own initiative. Dr Hannan said they were satisfactory and made the excellent suggestion that prior to future visits to the surgery, that I complete a week's blood pressure readings and present them at the surgery when I attend for future appointments. He facilitated this by putting on my records that he sanctioned this with an explanation of why he had done so. He also advised me to access "the Map of Medicine" which I have found to be a very useful tool with regard to finding out what level blood pressures should be at.

I am newly registered to access my GP Electronic Health Records and so far I have found the facility very useful. It is early days, but the reassurance I have been able to gain from knowing that my White Coat Hypertension is recognised and a very credible course of action is underway to circumnavigate the problem is in my records for both myself and medical staff to see, is a great relief. Further to this I have been able to obtain a repeat prescription in two days and am now able to peruse my own health records. I look forward to using this excellent facility frequently in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your understanding and acknowledgement of how White Coat Hypertension affects my blood pressure and for suggesting an excellent way of circumnavigating this problem. I have been able to see for myself on line, that you have already facilitated a way for this to be done by informing the Practice Nurses that I am able to monitor my own blood pressure readings in the future and that if I am concerned with the levels, then I will contact them. I have consulted the "Map of Medicine" and have found it an excellent tool as a guideline for understanding my blood pressure levels. Knowing that my blood pressure will no longer be a continuous cause for concern at every visit to the surgery. has afforded me peace of mind and I feel that my recent experiences have given me some control over my health care and will involve me in any future decisions to be made.

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I H, a patient of Haughton Thornley Medical Centres

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