

# Monthly Patient Newsletter



## Check Your Blood Pressure Like a Pro: A Simple Guide

A blood pressure test is a simple test to check your blood pressure to see if it's too high or too low. Regular blood pressure monitoring is crucial, and can be lifesaving. It helps individuals, clinicians and families prevent any complications with early detection. Monitoring trends makes it easier to track problems, identify risks, and make informed lifestyle or treatment adjustments.

High blood pressure (hypertension) can cause serious problems like strokes or heart disease, but it does not usually have any symptoms. The only way to find out if you have high blood pressure is to get it checked.

Low blood pressure (hypotension) can cause symptoms such as dizziness or fainting.

You may be given a blood pressure test:

- if a doctor thinks you may have high or low blood pressure
- as part of a general health check
- to check if high blood pressure is linked to other conditions, you may have

### This Issue includes:

**Check your Blood Pressure like a Pro: A Simple guide**

**Prostate & Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month**

**Understanding Barriers to Cancer Care Survey**

**Parent and Carer Session: Could you tell if your child was being exploited?**

**Wellbeing and Lifestyle Club**

- if you're taking medicine for a long-term condition
- if you're in hospital to check your health
- if you're pregnant as part of your antenatal care

It's particularly important to get your blood pressure checked if you're at higher risk of high blood pressure, for example if:

- you're aged 40 or over
- you're from a Black or South Asian background
- you have close relatives who have high blood pressure
- you smoke, drink too much alcohol or caffeine, or eat too much salt
- you're living with obesity

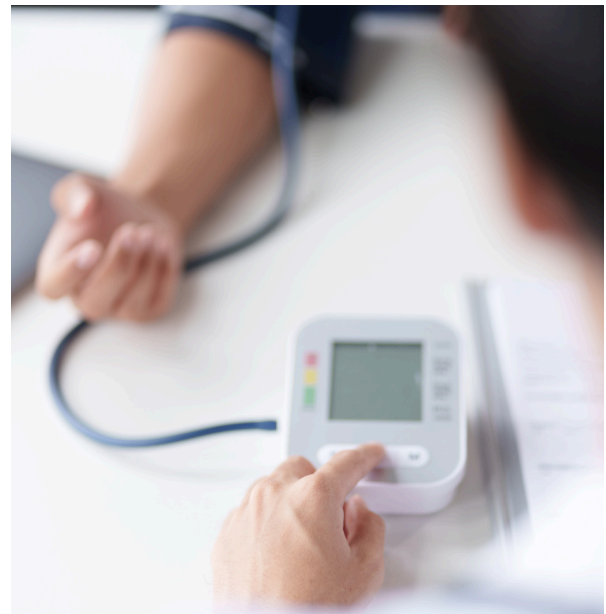
### **What happens when you have a blood pressure test?**

A blood pressure test usually takes a couple of minutes. You'll be asked to:

1. Sit down upright on a chair with a back and place your feet flat on the floor
2. Roll up your sleeve or remove any long-sleeved clothing so the cuff does not go over your clothes.
3. Outstretch your arm, rest it on a table and relax.
4. Have an inflatable armband (cuff) wrapped around your upper arm.
5. Relax, breathe normally and do not talk during the test
6. Stay in that position while the armband fills with air – this may feel uncomfortable for a few seconds until the air releases.

Devices can be different, but the armband is usually connected to a small machine that shows your blood pressure measurements.

The test may be done a couple of times to make sure the measurement is accurate.



### **Checking your blood pressure at home**

If a clinician needs you to check your blood pressure at home, they may give you a blood pressure machine to use. They will show you how to use it.

You can also buy your own blood pressure machine to use at home. Machines may be slightly different, so follow the instructions on how to use it to record your blood pressure.

Take your blood pressure, make a note of the numbers, then wait 1 minute before doing it again. You usually do this 2 times, once in the morning and once in the evening. Your doctor or nurse will tell you how many days you need to do this.

Did you know that you can get your blood pressure checked at most pharmacies and at your nearest Mendip Vale surgery using the Self Health Kiosk.

### **Self- Health Kiosk**

A Self-Health Kiosk is an easy-to-use station where you can perform basic health checks and gather important health information on your own, without a clinician needing to administer each test.

All your answers are saved to your medical record. Using the kiosk helps ensure that crucial health information is recorded before your GP appointment. This means your clinician already has the essential details, giving you more time to ask questions, discuss concerns, and decide if further tests or assessments are needed.

In addition to checking your blood pressure, the Self-Health Kiosk can help you complete assessments for UTIs, HRT, and the contraceptive pill. Coming soon, you will also be able to complete your NHS Health Check using the kiosk.

The kiosk is available for use anytime the surgery is open (8am – 6:30pm), making it easy and convenient to keep track of your health.

## What does your blood pressure result mean?

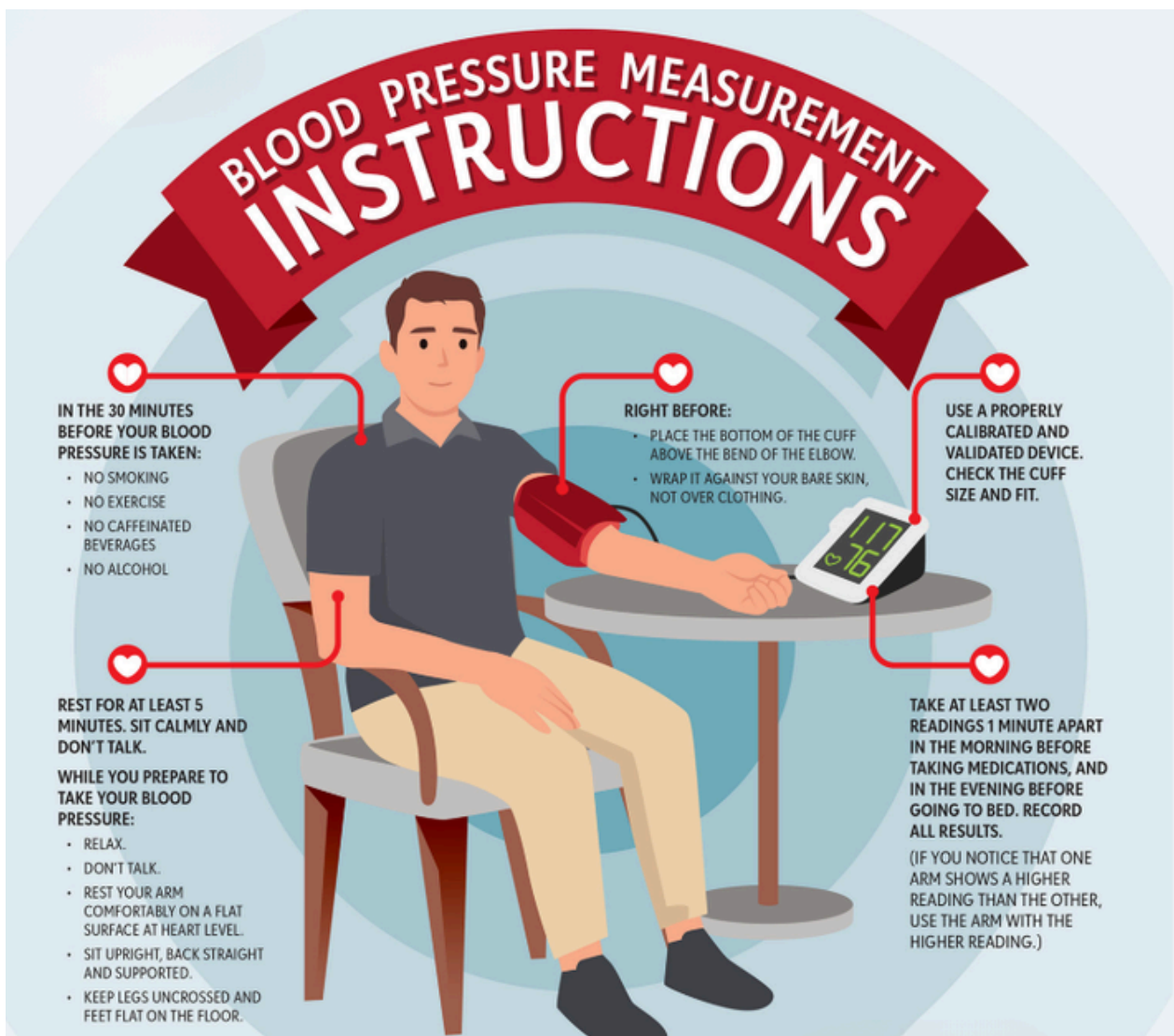
Blood pressure readings are given as 2 numbers, with the 1st number higher than the 2nd (for example, 130/80).

The first number measures the systolic pressure. This is the highest level your blood pressure reaches when your heart pumps blood around the body.

The second number measures the diastolic pressure. This is the lowest level your blood pressure reaches when your heart relaxes between each heartbeat.

Your blood pressure is usually considered high if it's either:

- 140/90 or higher when checked by a healthcare professional
- 135/85 or higher when checked at home



You can lower high blood pressure by making healthy lifestyle changes, such as eating healthily, exercising regularly and cutting down on alcohol.

Many people also need tablets to control their blood pressure. A doctor will recommend the most suitable medicine for you if needed.

For more advice on managing your blood pressure, go to the Mendip Vale Website: <https://mendipvale.nhs.uk/services/medical-guidance/hypertension-blood-pressure>

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## March is Prostate & Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month



In March, we shine a spotlight on **prostate and ovarian cancers**. These two cancers often go undiscussed, but awareness can make a huge difference in early detection and treatment.

### **Prostate Cancer: Know the Signs**

Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers in men. It usually starts to grow on the outer part of the prostate. This means it does not press on the tube that carries urine from the bladder to the penis (urethra) and causes symptoms until the cancer has grown or spread.

If this happens, it can cause changes to the way you pee, such as:

- finding it difficult to start peeing or straining to pee
- having a weak flow of urine
- "Stop start" peeing
- needing to pee urgently or often, or both
- feeling like you still need to pee when you've just finished
- peeing during the night

Other symptoms can include:

- Blood in your urine or in your semen
- lower back pain and losing weight without trying to (these may be symptoms of advanced prostate cancer)

See a GP if:

- you're over 50 years old, come from a Black ethnic background or have a history of prostate cancer in your family or you're worried about your risk of prostate cancer
- you're having trouble peeing or other symptoms of prostate cancer

Try not to be embarrassed if you have possible symptoms of prostate cancer. The doctor or nurse will be used to talking about these symptoms. For further information about them. For further information about the symptom and what happens at your GP Appointment, read more on the NHS Website: [Symptoms of prostate cancer - NHS](#)

### **Ovarian Cancer: Don't Ignore the Signs**

Ovarian cancer can be hard to detect in the early stages, but awareness of subtle changes can save lives. Ovarian cancer affects the ovaries. It mostly affects women over the age of 50 and anyone who has ovaries. Cancers of the ovary, fallopian tubes and peritoneum are often grouped together because they are similar and treated in the same way.

Symptoms of ovarian cancer include frequently (roughly 12 or more times a month) having:

- a swollen tummy or feeling bloated
- pain or tenderness in your tummy or the area between your hips (pelvic pain)
- no appetite or feeling full quickly after eating
- an urgent need to pee or needing to pee more often

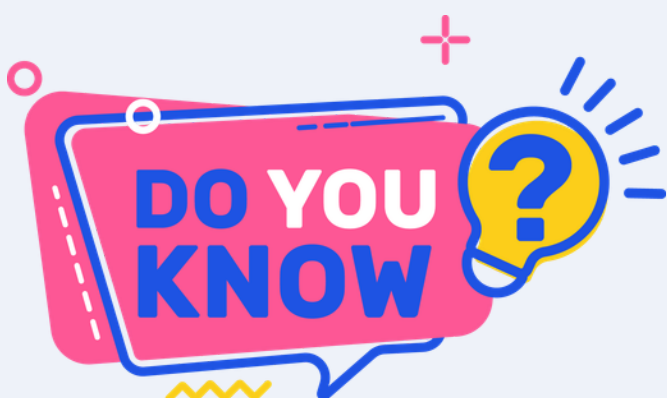
Other symptoms of ovarian cancer can include:

- indigestion
- constipation or diarrhoea
- back pain
- feeling tired all the time
- losing weight without trying
- unusual bleeding from the vagina, including between periods, heavier periods or after the menopause

See a GP if:

- you have any symptoms of ovarian cancer
- you have previously seen a GP, but your symptoms have not gone away, are worse or more frequent

For further information about the symptoms and what happens at your GP Appointment, read more on the NHS Website: [Ovarian cancer - Symptoms - NHS](#)



**30,589 appointments** were booked. Out of those, less than **2% (609)** of patients **Did not attend** (DNA) their appointment with **Saturdays** having the highest **DNA rate of 7%**

**6,874 eConsults** were submitted from the 1st – 31st January

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## Understanding Barriers to Cancer Care Survey

Somerset Wiltshire Avon and Gloucestershire Cancer Alliance is working to understand the experiences of people who have accessed cancer services - screening, diagnosis, appointments, or treatment. The survey itself asks a range of simple questions around experiences of attending appointments and finding and understanding healthcare information. It is completely confidential, and designed to help improve services for everyone. The survey is available in both Easy Read as well as translated into Polish, Arabic, Urdu, Romanian and Punjabi. Click the below for your preferred read:

- [Easy Read](#)
- [English](#)
- [Arabic](#)
- [Punjabi](#)
- [Urdu](#)
- [Polish](#)
- [Romanian](#)

**The survey is open until 10 March 2026.**

Access the survey and more information here:

<https://www.swagcanceralliance.nhs.uk/CANCER-CARE-SURVEY/>



## Do you have experience of cancer services?

Whether you have experienced cancer yourself or live, care, or work with someone who has, we want to hear your experiences of cancer services in our area on:



Take our  
Cancer Care  
Survey

- Screening (Bowel, Breast, Cervical, Lung)
- Diagnosis
- Treatment

Take the survey here or visit:  
[www.swagcanceralliance.nhs.uk/cancer-care-survey](https://www.swagcanceralliance.nhs.uk/cancer-care-survey)



# Could you tell if your child was being exploited?



Join one of our free online sessions led by Child Exploitation Prevention Officer **Andri Nicolaou**

**18 March** 7:00 - 8:30pm

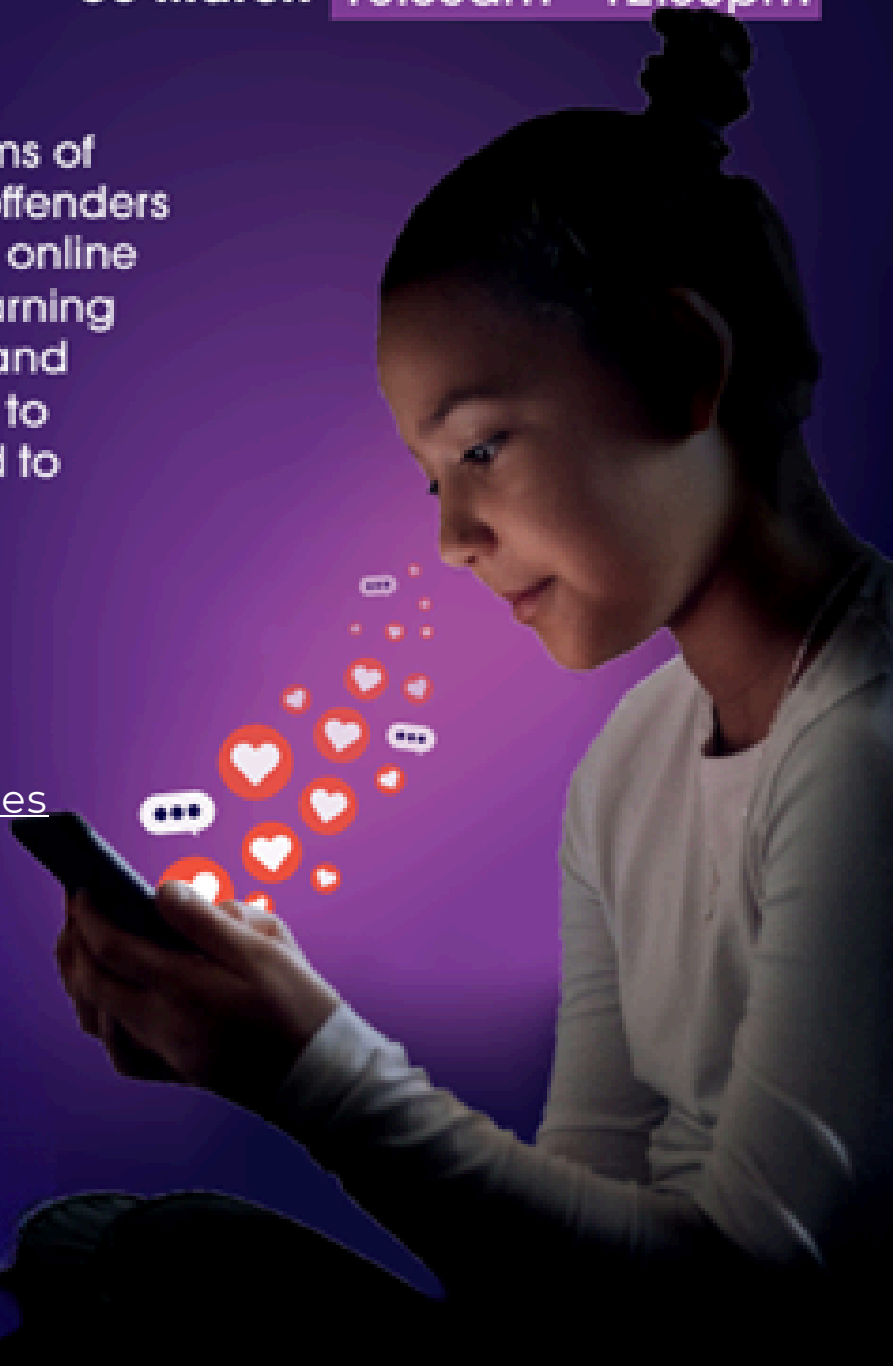
**30 March** 10:30am - 12:00pm

Learn about the different forms of child exploitation and how offenders groom/exploit children both online and offline. We'll highlight warning signs a child may be at risk and practical steps you can take to keep them safe and respond to any concerns.

Visit the **Avon and Somerset Police Eventbrite page**

[Avon and Somerset Police Events - 2 Upcoming Activities and Tickets | Eventbrite](#)

Sessions are free for parents and carers





## **Your experience of Weston General Hospital A&E and Clevedon Minor Injuries Unit**

If you live in North Somerset and you or your family have used Weston General Hospital Accident & Emergency department or Clevedon Minor Injuries Unit, please complete our 10-minute survey.

**Go to: [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/PSC14L/](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/PSC14L/)  
or scan the QR code.**

Your feedback matters, and will  
contribute to improving health services.



Closing date: 16th March 2026

For more information, email

[contact@healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk](mailto:contact@healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk) or call 07928 206368

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## Yatton Wellbeing Lifestyle Club

We're delighted to invite you to our Wellbeing Lifestyle Group, a welcoming space to move, connect, and learn practical ways to support your wellbeing, **11am at Yatton Methodist Church Hall**. Free to join and refreshments provided. The next dates are:



### **📍 Thursday 26th March – 11am at Yatton Methodist Church Hall -Worry to Wellness**

Join Barbara, former counsellor at Vine Counselling, for an insightful and supportive session focused on mental wellbeing.

Barbara will share practical strategies to manage anxiety and build resilience when coping with the challenges of modern-day living.

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## Newsletter Feedback

We're always looking for ways to improve how we communicate with our patients — and that includes our newsletter. Whether you found it helpful, had suggestions for new topics, or felt something was missing, or have something you would like to share, we'd love to hear from you.

Our newsletter is created with you in mind, aiming to keep you informed about health advice, local services, new treatments, and how to get the most from your NHS care. But we can only make it better with your input! Share your thoughts:

[Click here for your feedback](#)

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