

Using Florence to help monitor your blood pressure

You have agreed to take your blood pressure (BP) at home and send the readings in by text message to the GP surgery when asked by Florence, or 'Flo' for short, the messaging service.

Please remember that this is an automated service and no-one at the surgery will be looking at your readings every day, so if you feel unwell, you should take normal steps to look after yourself. This may include asking for help from health professionals as usual.

Your healthcare professional will explain how often they wish you to record your blood pressure and how to use the monitor.

You will receive a text reminder from Flo to send in your readings.

Your BP reading is **two numbers**, the pressure when the heart beats, and that in between beats. It is usually written for example as 130/85 mmHg. To send this by mobile phone, you only need to text the numbers, but you must also text **BP**, or the computer won't know what the numbers are. So to send in this reading you would put: **BP 130 85**

It doesn't matter if you use capital letters or lower case – Flo will understand; but if you don't put any letters, or a space between the two numbers, Flo gets confused.

Usually BP readings taken at home are a little lower than when taken at your doctor's surgery, but they are as accurate, if you take the BP reading as you have been shown.

Your nurse or doctor will monitor the readings you send in regularly and may send you a text message via Flo to let you know if any changes or actions are required. You do not reply to this message as Flo will not understand.

If you have been given a BP monitor by your GP practice, you will be asked to return the BP monitor once you no longer need it for this programme, so that other patients can also benefit from the service.

A few tips on how to prepare for taking your blood pressure:

- Wear loose clothing so that your arm isn't squeezed, and wrap the cuff around the bare skin of your arm.
- Use the same arm each time as indicated by your doctor or practice nurse.
- Take two readings, and send in the lower.
- Don't have a big meal or caffeinated drink, or smoke, within 30 minutes before taking BP readings.
- Sit calmly for at least 5 minutes before taking the BP reading; rest your arm on something firm so the cuff is level with your heart.
- Don't talk while you are taking your BP.

If you want to stop all messages, text STOP to Flo, but if you want a short break from receiving messages, text 'AWAY' and then 'HOME' when you want to start again.