Tips for measuring blood pressure

Telehealth and member-reported BP readings

Blood pressure readings can be collected in several ways — via outpatient and telehealth visits (including interactive and simultaneous audio/video visits, audio-only and online assessments), as well as remote monitoring devices that transmit results to your office. Your patients can also report their results to you.

Measure and record the patient's blood pressure (BP) during each visit. Encourage patients to relax and stay quiet during the reading.

Select the BP cuff of the correct size and ensure the patient is in a comfortable position with back and feet supported.

Avoid rounding BP values. Record the exact reading.

Follow up on abnormal values with treatment, repeat testing and appropriate referrals.

Retake the BP before the end of the visit if it is high (140/90 or greater) when taken initially. If multiple readings are recorded, use the lowest systolic and lowest diastolic BP on that date as the representative BP. The systolic and diastolic results do not need to be from the same reading.

Partner with patients: Create a blame-free environment to recognize patients for achieving treatment goals; encourage treatment-related questions to be answered honestly to resolve issues; and encourage self-measured BP for those who could benefit.

Document in the medical record all BP measurements taken during each office visit and ensure submitted claims or encounters include the appropriate Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) Category II codes for BP readings.

Consider adding an anti-hypertensive and/or adjusting titrations of existing medications for patients on more than three anti-hypertensive agents.

Consider multi-agent combo pills, daily dosing, education, 90+ day supply, and other tactics.

Ensure adequate documentation and diagnosis information. Statements such as "rule out hypertension (HTN)," "possible HTN," "white-coat HTN," "questionable HTN" and "consistent with HTN" alone are not sufficient to confirm the diagnosis in the medical record.

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