

# What's the Best Way to Track Your Blood Pressure?

By Amy Norton

*HealthDay Reporter*

WEDNESDAY, April 18, 2018 (HealthDay News) -- [Blood pressure readings](#) taken with a portable monitor may be a much better gauge of your prognosis than readings at the doctor's office, new research suggests.

The study of nearly 64,000 adults found that "ambulatory" blood pressure monitoring was clearly better at predicting a patient's risk of dying over the next five years, versus doctor's office readings.

"The difference is striking," said lead researcher Dr. Jose Banegas, of the Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain.

He said the findings offer "unequivocal evidence" in support of ambulatory monitoring.

"There is no scientific or clinical justification for not using ambulatory blood pressure monitoring, which should be part of the evaluation and follow-up of most hypertensive patients," Banegas said, referring to the medical term for [high blood pressure](#).

Ambulatory blood pressure readings are taken with a small monitor that patients wear for 24 hours to automatically record blood pressure every half hour or so.

Unlike doctor's office readings, ambulatory monitoring captures real-life blood pressure changes, explained Dr. Raymond Townsend, of the University of Pennsylvania.

That can, for example, detect "masked" [high blood pressure](#), Townsend said. Those are cases where people have normal readings at the doctor's office, but their daily life tells a different story.

Ambulatory monitors have been around for a long time, but they are used "infrequently" in the United States, said Townsend, who wrote an editorial published with the study. Both appear in the April 19 *New England Journal of Medicine*.

One reason, Townsend added, is because insurers often don't pay.

The new findings may encourage wider use, though, said Eileen Handberg, a member of the American College of Cardiology's Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease Leadership Council.

It's "hard to argue with" results from such a large study, said Handberg, who was not involved with the research.

They're based on a Spanish registry with information on almost 64,000 adults whose primary care doctors ordered ambulatory blood pressure readings for various reasons.

Some had borderline-high readings in the office, for instance, while others had suspected "white-coat" hypertension. That refers to doctor's office readings that are higher than what a person usually has during their typical day.

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