

# ♥ HEART HEALTH

## Take Charge Of Your Health With Daily At-Home Blood Pressure Monitoring

(NAPSA)—According to the Mayo Clinic, at-home blood pressure monitoring is an important part of managing high blood pressure. What many don't realize is that blood pressure monitoring should be a part of their daily routine, just the same as showering or brushing their teeth. That is because about 72 million adults (nearly one in three) in the United States have high blood pressure. In addition, about 59 million American adults have prehypertension, a condition that also increases the chance of heart disease and stroke.

Why? High blood pressure has a correlation to obesity, and, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, during the past 20 years there has been a dramatic increase in obesity in the United States. In recent years, only one state (Colorado) had a prevalence of obesity less than 20 percent, while 30 states had a prevalence equal to or greater than 25 percent.

### How Weight Affects Blood Pressure

Obesity is defined simply as too much body fat and recognized as a major risk factor for coronary heart disease, which can lead to heart attacks. When obesity sets in, it thickens blood vessels, which in turn makes them rigid. Thus, the heart has to work harder to push



the blood through the body and results in increased blood pressure.

Most people are familiar with the 120/80 mmHg reading, which represents the systolic (120 mmHg) and diastolic (80 mmHg) measurements. It is measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg) and recorded as two numbers—systolic pressure (when the heart beats) over diastolic pressure (when the heart relaxes between beats). When taking readings at home, health organizations generally agree that optimal readings should be less than 135/85 mmHg or less than 130/80 mmHg in those patients who are at high risk.

To obtain readings at home, the American Heart Association (AHA) says it's important to purchase a monitor that has been clinically validated to accurately measure blood pressure. All Omron home blood pressure monitors are clinically validated and

designed to make it easy to measure and accurately track daily readings.

### Healthy Heart Practices

The following are some key steps that Americans can weave into their routines to achieve and maintain a healthy blood pressure:

- Monitor your blood pressure at home with an Omron blood pressure monitor. The AHA recommends people with or at risk of high blood pressure to routinely monitor their blood pressure at home, taking readings in the morning and at night.

- Make physical activity part of your daily routine by getting 30 minutes of exercise daily.

- Select heart-healthy foods when planning meals, including foods low in saturated fat.

### Pledge To Have A Healthy Heart

Pledge to achieve a heart-healthy lifestyle at [www.healthyheartpledge.com](http://www.healthyheartpledge.com) and you'll automatically be registered for the Healthy Heart Pledge Sweepstakes. By signing up, you will be entered for a chance to win one of 49 prizes for the mind, body and soul—from Omron product packages to a seven-night cruise or even a Hawaiian vacation. Visit now through December 31, 2009 and sign up to take another important step toward a heart-healthy lifestyle.