Blood Pressure Case Finding

NICE NG136 (updated February 2026) | NHS Advanced Service Spec v2.3

EMERGENCY: Call 999 Now

- ☐ BP 180/120+ WITH: severe headache, confusion, chest pain, palpitations, visual disturbance, focal neurological symptoms, suspected stroke or TIA, or acute breathlessness
- ☐ Give written record. Relay results to GP immediately via approved secure channel.

URGENT: Same-Day Action

- ☐ BP 180/120+, no acute symptoms: refer to GP or urgent care same day
- ☐ Irregular pulse persists on second reading: same-day GP (possible atrial fibrillation)
- ☐ Call the practice while patient is still present. Send results immediately.

Clinic reading: action at a glance

Clinic reading	Action	GP timeframe
Below 140/90 (normal)	Lifestyle advice; written record; no referral	Weekly summary
140/90 to 179/119 (high)	Offer ABPM + lifestyle advice	After ABPM result
180/120+, no symptoms	Same-day GP referral	Same day
180/120+ with acute symptoms	Call 999	Immediate

ABPM result: action at a glance (24-hr, waking average, min. 14 readings)

ABPM average	Diagnosis	GP timeframe
Below 135/85	Normal: recheck in 5 years	Weekly summary
135/85 to 149/94	Stage 1 hypertension	Within 3 weeks
150/95 or above	Stage 2 hypertension	Within 7 days
Patient declines ABPM	Refer on clinic reading	Within 3 weeks
Fails to attend	2 contact attempts; notify GP if unsuccessful	Promptly

ADVISE: Lifestyle (Every Patient)

- ☐ Salt below 6 g/day; balanced diet, more fruit and vegetables
- ☐ 150+ mins moderate exercise/week; healthy weight
- ☐ Alcohol within limits; stop smoking; moderate caffeine

Key pitfalls: Confirm eligibility before measuring. Use a validated BP monitor approved for service delivery. Ensure patient is seated and rested for at least 5 minutes before measurement. First visit: measure both arms; use the higher-reading arm for all future measurements and ABPM. Use the lower of the two readings for clinical decision-making. Always offer ABPM when clinic BP is 140/90 mmHg or above and below 180/120 mmHg. Record consent before measuring. Send same-day results immediately. Complete clinical record before submitting MYS claim.

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