Blood Pressure Cuffs

- Are we taking blood pressures correctly?
- Are we using the correct size cuff for the patient?

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Miscuffing is most frequent error in measuring BP

- Obesity is on the rise in America with >30% of Americans being obese.
- Under cuffing large arms is the most common error in taking blood pressures.
- The correct cuff should be a 2:1 ratio of length to width.
- Using the wrong size cuff can over or under estimate the patients blood pressure.
Other Common Errors

- The bottom of the cuff should be 2-3cm above the patients AC.
- No one should be talking while the blood pressure is being taken.
- The patient should be seated comfortable with their back supported.
- The patient’s legs should not be crossed.
- The arm should be supported at heart level.
- BP’s should not be taken on top of tight clothing.
- BP cuff should not crisscross. This can happen if arms are misshaped or obese.
Correct Cuff Sizes
as recommended by
American Heart Association

- Arms 22-26cm use a small adult
- Arms 27-34cm use a regular adult
- Arms 35-44cm use a large adult
- Arms 45-52cm use a adult thigh
Let's Pick the Correct Cuff for our Patients

- On admission to the floor we will measure the patient's arm to determine the correct cuff for that patient.
- Each cuff is labeled with the arm circumference it should be used for.
- The correct cuff will then be written on the patient's white board and this should be the cuff used with each blood pressure reading.
- This will help keep the patient's blood pressures more accurate.
- Any patient with upper arm circumference of 40cm or greater will be issued a radial cuff to be used during their stay.
Radial Blood Pressure Cuffs

- Rectangular cuffs on forearms can overestimate the patients blood pressure.
- Radial cuffs are a conical shape to correctly fit the patients forearm for more accurate readings.
When to use a Radial Cuff per GE Healthcare

- Adults over age 18.
- Forearm between 26-36 cm.
- Upper arm greater than 40 cm.
- Upper arm cuff cannot be closed straight.
- Upper arm cuff overlaps the elbow due to upper arm being too short in length.
- Can only be used with an automated blood pressure device. Cannot be used with wall units.
More on Radial Cuffs

- Yes, they are disposable cuffs but they can be used up to about 3000 times.
- Yes, they can be cleaned with Clorox wipes and used on different patients.
- Yes, if used on an isolation patient it must be thrown away at the end of the patient's hospital stay.
- Yes, these cuffs are actually positioned upside down compared to how we normally place cuffs on the upper arm.
References


