Measure accurately

Screening checklist
When screening patients for high blood pressure:

☐ Use a validated, automated device to measure BP
☐ Use the correct cuff size on a bare arm
☐ Ensure patient is positioned correctly

Confirmatory checklist
If screening blood pressure is ≥140/90 mm Hg, obtain a confirmatory measurement:

☐ Repeat screening steps above
☐ Ensure patient has an empty bladder
☐ Ensure patient has rested quietly for at least five minutes
☐ Obtain the average of at least three BP measurements

Act rapidly

If patient has blood pressure ≥140/90 mm Hg confirmed:

☐ Use an evidence-based protocol to guide treatment
☐ Re-assess patient every 2–4 weeks until BP is controlled
☐ Whenever possible, prescribe single-pill combination therapy

Partner with patients, families and communities

To empower patients to control their blood pressure:

☐ Engage patients using evidence-based communication strategies
☐ Help patients accurately self-measure BP
☐ Direct patients and families to resources that support medication adherence and healthy lifestyles

Evidence-based protocols typically include
• Counsel on and reinforce lifestyle modifications
• Ensure early follow-up and add preferred medications in a step-wise fashion, until BP is controlled
• For most patients, give preference to:
  – Thiazide diuretics
  – Dihydropyridine calcium channel blockers
  – ACE inhibitors (ACEI) or
  – Angiotensin receptor blockers (ARB)
• Do not prescribe both ACEI and ARB to same patient
• If BP ≥160/100 mm Hg, start therapy with two medications or a single pill combination

Evidence-based communication strategies include
• Begin with open-ended questions about adherence, including recent medication use
• Explore reasons for possible non-adherence
• Elicit patient views on options and priorities to customize a care plan for each patient
• Remain non-judgmental at all times
• Use teach-back to ensure understanding of the care plan

Evidence-based tips for patient self-measurement of BP
• Instruct patient to measure BP accurately using a validated, automated device and correct positioning for measurement
• Ask patient to record ≥2 morning BP measurements and ≥2 evening BP measurements for ≥ 4 consecutive days between office visits
• Develop a systematic approach to ensure patients can act rapidly to address elevated BP readings between office visits
• Counsel patients that self-measured BP ≥135/85 mm Hg is considered elevated

Evidence-based lifestyle changes to lower BP include
• Following the DASH diet, which is rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains; low-fat dairy, poultry, fish and plant-based oils; and limits sodium, sweets, sugary drinks, red meat and saturated fats
• Engaging in moderate physical activity, such as brisk walking, for 40 minutes a day at least four days a week
• Maintaining a healthy body mass index (BMI)
• Limiting alcohol to ≤2 drinks/day in men, ≤1 drink/day in women

These checklists are not intended to be comprehensive. Additions and modifications to fit local practice are encouraged.