

Review: Wireless blood pressure monitor transmits reading to smartphone

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If you've seen my mugshot, you can probably tell I can stand to lose a few pounds. It's a constant battle, and I'm trying to take it seriously. My doctor likes to remind me to monitor my blood pressure, and I have a pretty nice machine at home to do just that.

The machine I have uses a few AA batteries with an LCD display connected via rubber hose to a cuff. It's the same kind my doctor uses.

It's a far cry from the old-fashioned manual pump monitor we've seen

hanging on the wall of every doctor's office.

I've been testing the latest generation sphygmomanometer (I like using that word) from Withings, the company known for health gadgets such as smart scales and baby monitors.

Withings' new Wireless Blood Pressure Monitor (\$129.95, withings.com) uses your smartphone (iOS or Android) as the display and, as its name suggests, uses Bluetooth to connect your [phone](#) wirelessly to the cuff.

The monitor uses 4 AAA batteries and an air pump inside a small cylinder attached to the cuff. Pair the monitor to your smartphone or tablet and download the free Withings Healthmate app to begin.

To take your blood pressure, wrap the cuff around your upper arm and press the power button on the cylinder housing. As the unit powers on, it will make the Bluetooth connection to your phone and automatically launch the app and leave it on the screen where you press the button to start the measurement.

Your phone needs to be unlocked and awake for the app to launch; otherwise you'll need to launch the app manually.

The measurement takes about 40 seconds to complete, and the app keeps track of your measurements (blood pressure and heart rate) on a chart for handy comparisons of your readings over time.

The monitor is medically compliant with European medical device regulations and has received clearance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

You can also share your data, either via email or direct download from

your smartphone or tablet, if your doctor is equipped for the transfer.

The monitor works with iPhone 3GS or newer, iPad 2 and newer, Android phones or tablets 4.0 or newer. The apps are not tablet optimized, so you'll just see the phone version on your screen.

The monitor can use regular Bluetooth and Bluetooth 4.0. There's also a USB port with an adapter included so you can connect the monitor to your phone via its sync cable if needed.

If you have more than one person at home who wants to monitor their blood pressure, it's possible for each to download the app and use the device.

When powered up, it will automatically try to connect to the phone it last used.

To use the monitor on another phone, make sure the other smartphones that use the monitor have Bluetooth turned off or they're out of Bluetooth range (about 30 feet).

After 10 seconds of not finding the last used phone, the monitor goes into discoverable mode to connect to other phones.

There's only one button on the monitor. It turns the unit on or off and if pressed during a measure, it will stop the reading immediately.

The Wireless Blood Pressure Monitor is very well built and can fit almost any arm circumference from 9 inches to 17 inches.

WIRELESS BLOOD PRESSURE MONITOR

Pros: Works well. Easy to use. Wireless.

Cons: A bit expensive.

Bottom line: Nice device to own if you're serious about monitoring your [blood pressure](#).

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