

Why do we check your blood pressure at your dental health review?

When you come to visit us for your dental health review, often one of the first things we do is use our electronic blood pressure monitor to take a recording of your blood pressure, but why?

Well, blood pressure readings can elucidate whether or not you are at risk from a number of related illnesses. The blood pressure monitor shows us two readings;

1. Systolic - The pressure exerted on the arteries when the heart beats (top number).
2. Diastolic - The pressure when the heart is at rest (bottom number).

These pressure readings are categorised;

Low blood pressure - 70-90/40-60mmHg

Ideal blood pressure - 0-120/60-80mmHg

Pre-high blood pressure - 120-140/80-90mmHg

High blood pressure - 140+/90+

In summary though we'd like you to have, ideally a blood pressure of 120/80.

But what do all those numbers really mean?

Let's not get weighed down by the biology of it all, but the consequences of what your blood pressure reading lies is worth considering. Low blood pressure, also known as hypotension, can cause dizzy spells, loss of balance, blurred vision, general weakness, fainting and nausea.

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, can lead to some very serious diseases including; heart disease, kidney failure and strokes among other things.

So isn't all this lot doctor stuff?

So why do we check your blood pressure at the dentist? The answer to the question is that patients who visit the dentist as is recommended come every six months, or more frequently in some cases.

This is the perfect time to monitor and record our patient's blood pressure, so that if there is any unexplained rise or fall in the reading we can recommend they get checked out at their GP before the effects of high or low blood pressure show themselves.

This is especially important as in many cases of high blood pressure, it is completely symptomless and you could be going without necessary treatment.

Now don't get your knickers in a twist worrying about your blood pressure readings as they are often effected for perfectly normal reasons for instance; age, stress, exercise, diet, temperature or even the time of day!

If there was ever a concern we would recommend you visit your GP so that they can check your blood pressure themselves and if necessary sort you out with the doctor stuff, which might mean putting you on medication such as statins or simply making a few lifestyle changes; better diet, more regular exercise, that sort of thing.

Hopefully that satisfied all you curious cats out there! Just keep ticking!

