

## Questions from patients participating in the 'Digital delivery of self-care for hypertension' webinars (February/March 2021) and our Answers

Panel (providing answers): Kevin McGibbon (arrhythmia clinical nurse specialist), Ann Hughes (practice nurse/digital expert), Dr Ruth Chambers (retired GP)

### **Q1 What are your top tips on how I can control my raised blood pressure?**

**Answer:** Prevention is always better than cure! Lifestyle choices can make a significant difference when trying to reduce your blood pressure, like keeping an eye on the salt intake in the food you eat - as there is lots of 'hidden' salt in processed foods; stopping smoking if you do; and regular exercise.

It's really important to have good blood pressure control as poorly controlled blood pressure will put further pressure on your heart.

### **Q2 On behalf of our PPG (Practice Participation Group) I'd like to spread the news about these webinars via social media. What's best resource to use?**

**Answer:** Twitter @digihealthwell and [www.digihealthwell.co.uk](http://www.digihealthwell.co.uk) is where you can find the links and resources to this and other patient webinars.

### **Q3 I have type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. I have one of these wonderful watches which, tells me everything including *How Much I Sleep, My Daily Blood Pressure and My Heartbeat*. How much should I relate to these readings?**

**Answer:** If this is an Apple Watch then you can access your 'health' app and see all examples of your readings. When you do a blood oxygen reading etc, then you can select 'share with Apple health'. If it is any other type of watch then you should be able to do a screen grab of the readings and then be able to show these to your clinician when you next meet.

### **Q4 Are all practices taking part in this digital programme and do I need to be put on this texting programme by the surgery or can I take part myself?**

**Answer:** In Staffordshire it is available in all practices. If elsewhere you will need to ask your practice nurse what texting service they offer to eg allow a patient to share texts capturing their blood pressure readings.

### **Q5 Are all these apps accessible for visually impaired people?**

**Answer:** Not in every case so we would suggest you look at each individual app. For some and an increasing number, they are looking to make apps more accessible. For example, the *Manage Your Health* app can allow you to increase the size of the font, change the background colour and the colour of the font if needed eg if someone is colour blind.

### **Q6 I do not understand or have never been told what my blood pressure reading should be.**

**Answer:** For those patients with pre-existing conditions such as diabetes, your BP will be more aggressively managed by your surgery to ensure that you BP is well controlled.

For those people that do not have any other pre-existing health condition, the ideal BP is 120/80mmHg or so- though many patients have slightly higher readings without causing concerns. Take a look at the example self-management plans on the digihealthwell website which clearly mark out what people's blood pressure readings should be, and when to worry.

### **Q7 Does nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) play a part in pushing up my blood pressure readings too?**

**Answer:** NRT is much safer for your health than smoking – and hopefully you will wean off the NRT soon.

**Q8 Can we access the presentation for reference after the meeting?**

**Answer:** Yes, the presentation and resources are available on our digihealthwell website

**Comments**

“I’m a professional joining to enhance patient care. I think this initiative is excellent.”

“Everyone : Thank you very much - very useful!”