Stay Well! Beep!

Beep! My cell phone alarm waking me up. Beep! My espresso machine is starting an early morning conversation, telling me to add water. Beep, my choice of espresso is accepted by this modern marvel. As my first shot of espresso was being brewed with that oh so delicious smell, I hear another beep. The microwave telling me the blueberry muffin is warm. I need to quench my thirst with cold water, beep. The water dispenser on my refrigerator is talking to me. Beep. The entire morning conversation in one, dull, annoying monosyllabic word. Beep.

All these modern marvels in the comfort of my home, making my home more comfortable. Electronic devices are assisting us in every aspect of life, including health and wellness, talking in the rudimentary language of beep.

I glanced over to my kitchen table. Another machine with that one-word vocabulary is staring me down. It is calling me, begging me to sit at the table. I hear the whispers, now is the time… It whimpers to me, wanting my attention at this early hour. It is my home blood pressure monitor. The magnetic pull is as strong as gravity. I groggily slide onto the chair at the table. My feet are placed on the floor, no dangling feet allowed, left arm in the blood pressure cuff with both arms resting on the table. No talking allowed during this procedure. Position good, mouth shut. Espresso will have to wait. Push the on-button. Beep.

This modern marvel successfully completed the required job. Beep. I uncuff, sip the espresso, and smile at a good blood pressure reading. No operator error here. Accurate readings depend on a person’s body position, machine position, type of machine, and mouth-closed position. Dangling your feet or talking can artificially elevate the blood pressure reading. There are several other nuances to getting more accurate blood pressure readings, detailed in the how-to tiny print manual. Well worth the read. After all, I want to be sure I get correct readings. My life depends on it!

These modern marvels are small, and many are wearable. Wearables monitor heart rate, blood glucose or sugar, fitness, steps, pulse, dispense medication including insulin, and more. Personal health data is more detailed and accessible to the patient and healthcare provider.

Data, what to do with it? Understanding the devices, numbers, significance, and discussing the data with your healthcare provider is the place to start. I will share my blood pressure readings with my healthcare provider. Before stepping foot into the medical office, I will have to tolerate another modern marvel, the touchless thermometer. Beep.