

Hypertension **What you should know**

Knowing your blood pressure is an important part of being healthy. If high blood pressure is left untreated, it may result in serious health conditions such as heart disease, stroke or kidney disease. Health problems can develop if your blood pressure numbers are above normal most of the time. The American Heart Association says nearly half of American adults have high blood pressure, but many are unaware because most have no symptoms. The effects of high blood pressure can last a lifetime.

Blood pressure is measured as systolic and diastolic pressures. Systolic measures the force against the artery walls as the heart contracts to force blood through the body. Diastolic measures the force against the arteries when the heart relaxes between beats. You will see blood pressure numbers written with the systolic number above or before the diastolic number, such as 120/80 mmHg.

Knowing your blood pressure numbers is important, even when you're feeling well. Blood pressure doesn't stay the same all the time. It changes with activity and sleep, or when you're excited or anxious.

If your blood pressure numbers put you into an elevated category, lifestyle changes can help delay or prevent the progression to high blood pressure.

If you take blood pressure medicine and your blood pressure readings are within the normal range, you still have hypertension, but it is controlled by the medicine. Be sure to continue taking your medicine as ordered by your health care provider. See your health care provider regularly to monitor your blood pressure and general health and wellness.

Category	Systolic mmHg	and	Diastolic mmHg
Normal	less than 120		less than 80
Elevated	120-129		less than 80
High blood pressure (Hypertension)			
Stage 1	130-139	or	80-89
Stage 2	140 or higher	or	90 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis	180 or higher	and/or	120 or higher

Consult your health care provider immediately

Know Your Numbers



Healthy lifestyle habits can help you maintain normal blood pressure.

Talk to your health care provider about:

- healthy eating, including salt/sodium intake
- alcohol intake
- physical activity
- healthy weight
- stress management
- smoking/tobacco use/cessation



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