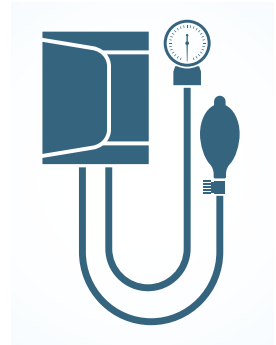


YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

What is blood pressure?

Each time your heart beats, blood is pumped out of your heart into arteries that carry the blood throughout your body. Your blood pressure is a measurement of the pressure/force inside your arteries with each heartbeat.

Your blood pressure does not stay the same at all times. It is higher when you are active, excited or nervous, and lower when you rest. Your blood pressure can also change due to age, medicine, and changes in position.



How is blood pressure measured?

A special cuff is used to measure your blood pressure. The cuff inflates and deflates, and as it does, your blood pressure is measured. A stethoscope may also be used with the cuff.

Blood pressure readings

Blood pressure is recorded as two measurements: systolic and diastolic blood pressure. Systolic blood pressure is the top/first number, and diastolic blood pressure is the bottom/second number. The numbers are expressed as millimeter of mercury (mmHg)

| | |
|--|--|
| Systolic Blood Pressure | The pressure in your arteries when they are filled with blood as your heart beats |
| Diastolic Blood Pressure | The pressure in your arteries when your heart rests between beats |
| What do the numbers mean? | <p>Your blood pressure can be normal, elevated, or you may have Stage 1 or 2 hypertension (high blood pressure).</p> <p>Normal blood pressure: Less than 120 / less than 80 mmHg Elevated blood pressure: 120-129 / less than 80 mmHg Stage 1 hypertension: 130-139 (top number) OR 80-89 (bottom number)* Stage 2 hypertension: 140 or higher (top number) OR 90 or higher (bottom number)*</p> <p>*Two or more readings with these numbers mean you have high blood pressure</p> |
| <p>If your TOP NUMBER IS EVER 180 OR HIGHER and/or your BOTTOM NUMBER IS EVER 110 OR HIGHER</p> <p>GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL HELP OR HAVE SOMEONE TAKE YOU TO THE HOSPITAL RIGHT AWAY!</p> | |

Tips for taking your blood pressure

- Sit still for at least 5 minutes before you take your blood pressure.
- Do not drink caffeine or smoke for 30 minutes before you take your blood pressure.
- Being nervous when you see your healthcare provider can cause a false high blood pressure reading. This is called “white coat syndrome.” If this happens, your healthcare provider may ask you to:
 - Check your blood pressure throughout the day and bring a blood pressure log to your follow-up visits.
 - Wear a blood pressure monitor for 24 hours. The monitor is usually set to take your blood pressure every 15 to 30 minutes.

What are the symptoms of high blood pressure?

High blood pressure usually doesn't cause symptoms. It is often called the “silent killer” because it can damage your heart, kidneys and brain without you knowing anything is wrong.

What causes high blood pressure?

Your risk of high blood pressure is higher if you:

- Have a family history of high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease or diabetes
- Are African American
- Are 60 or older
- Take birth control pills
- Are overweight

Is high blood pressure dangerous?

High blood pressure is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease. It can lead to a transient ischemic attack (TIA), stroke, heart attack, enlarged heart, heart failure, peripheral vascular disease (such as poor circulation and pain in your legs), aneurysm, kidney disease and broken blood vessels in your eyes.

What can I do to lower my blood pressure?

It is very important to take an active role in your health and follow a plan of care to control your blood pressure.

Diet and lifestyle changes:

- Reach and stay at your ideal body weight.
- Get regular exercise.
- Eat a well-balanced diet that is low in salt, fat and cholesterol, and contains lots of fresh fruits and vegetables. Talk to your healthcare provider about the DASH diet and limiting the amount of sodium in your diet. Ask for a referral to a registered dietitian to get a personalized eating plan and support to meet your goals.
- Limit alcohol to 2 drinks per day (for most men) and 1 drink per day for women and lower-weight men. One drink is 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof liquor.
- Control stress and anger.
- Do not smoke or use any form of tobacco or nicotine.

Manage your health:

- Manage lipid levels (cholesterol and triglycerides) and other health conditions, such as diabetes.
- You may need to take medicine to control your blood pressure. Take this and all other prescribed medicine exactly as prescribed. Blood pressure medicine does not keep working after you stop taking it.
- Do not take any new type of medicine, even non-prescription medicine and supplements, without asking your healthcare provider.
 - Some over-the-counter medications, such as decongestants, can change the way your blood pressure medicine works.
- Do not stop taking any type of medicine or supplement you usually take without asking your healthcare provider.
- See your healthcare providers for follow-up visits.
- Contact your healthcare providers if you have questions or concerns.

Your healthcare provider may ask you to keep track of our blood pressure at home. You can use this log to track your numbers. Follow the instructions you received about taking your blood pressure, and let us know if you have any questions or concerns. Please bring the log to your follow-up visits.

| Day 1 Date | Time | BP | Day 2 Date | Time | BP Reading | Day 3 Date | Time | BP |
|----------------|------|---------------|----------------|------|---------------|---|------|---------------|
| | | / | | | / | | | / |
| | | / | | | / | | | / |
| Day 4 Date | Time | BP Reading | Day 5 Date | Time | BP Reading | Day 6 Date | Time | BP Reading |
| | | / | | | / | | | / |
| | | / | | | / | | | / |
| Day 7 Date | Time | BP | Day 8 Date | Time | BP | Day 9 Date | Time | BP |
| | | / | | | / | | | / |
| | | / | | | / | | | / |
| Day 10 Date | Time | BP | Day 11 Date | Time | BP | Day 12 Date | Time | BP |
| | | / | | | / | | | / |
| | | / | | | / | | | / |
| Day 13 Date | Time | BP | Day 14 Date | Time | BP | My Blood Pressure Goal: / | | |
| | | / | | | / | | | |
| | | / | | | / | | | |

My pulse today: _____

My blood pressure (BP) today: _____ **Arm:** L R

If your BP is higher than 130 on top or 80 on the bottom, see your healthcare provider and ask what your BP goal should be.

If BP is higher than 180 on top or 110 on the bottom for two readings in a row, get medical help RIGHT AWAY!

This information is not intended to replace the medical advice of your healthcare provider. Please consult your healthcare provider for advice about a specific medical condition or treatment.



clevelandclinic.org/heart

© 2000-2022 Cleveland Clinic. All rights reserved.

Rev. 4/22

1011701 / 156577