



American
Heart
Association.

Live Fierce™
Reduce Your Risk

MANAGING YOUR
HEALTH **AT HOME**





What is High Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against blood vessel walls. It's measured in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg).

High blood pressure (HBP) means the pressure in your arteries is higher than it should be. Another name for high blood pressure is hypertension.

Blood pressure is written as two numbers, such as 112/78 mm Hg. The top, or larger, number (called systolic pressure) is the pressure when the heart beats. The bottom, or smaller, number (called diastolic pressure) is the pressure when the heart rests between beats.

Normal blood pressure is below 120/80 mm Hg. If you're an adult and your systolic pressure is 120 to 129, and your diastolic pressure is less than 80, you have **elevated blood pressure**. **High blood pressure** is a systolic pressure of 130 or higher, or a diastolic pressure of 80 or higher, that stays high over time.

High blood pressure usually has no signs or symptoms. That's why it is so dangerous. But it can be managed.

Nearly half of the American population over age 20, has HBP, and many don't even know it. Not treating high blood pressure is dangerous. High blood pressure increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Make sure you get your blood pressure checked regularly and treat it the way your health care professional advises.

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120-129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1	130-139	or	80-89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

Am I at higher risk of developing HBP?

There are risk factors that increase your chances of developing HBP. Some you can control, and some you can't.

Those that can be controlled are:

- Cigarette smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke
- Diabetes
- Being obese or overweight
- High cholesterol
- Unhealthy diet (high in sodium, low in potassium, and drinking too much alcohol)
- Physical inactivity

Factors that can't be modified or are difficult to control are:

- Family history of high blood pressure
- Race/ethnicity
- Increasing age
- Gender (males)
- Chronic kidney disease
- Obstructive sleep apnea

Socioeconomic status and psychosocial stress are also risk factors for HBP. These can affect access to basic living needs, medication, health care professionals, and the ability to adopt lifestyle changes.

(continued)



How can I tell I have it?

The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to get it checked regularly.

For proper diagnosis of HBP, your health care professional will use an average based on two or more readings obtained on two or more visits.



What can I do about HBP?

- Don't smoke and avoid secondhand smoke.
- Reach and maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a healthy diet that is low in saturated and trans fats and rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products. Aim to consume less than 1,500 mg/day of sodium (salt). Even reducing your daily intake by 1,000 mg can help.
- Eat foods rich in potassium. Aim for 3,500 – 5,000 mg of dietary potassium per day.
- Limit alcohol to no more than one drink per day if you're a woman or two drinks a day if you're a man.
- Be more physically active. Aim for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity or at least 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week, or a combination of both, spread throughout the week. Add muscle-strengthening activity at least two days per week for more health benefits.
- Take medicine the way your health care professional tells you.
- Know what your blood pressure should be and work to keep it at that level.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1 Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721), or visit heart.org to learn more about heart disease and stroke.
- 2 Sign up for our monthly *Heart Insight* e-news for heart patients and their families at HeartInsight.org.
- 3 Connect with others sharing similar journeys with heart disease and stroke by joining our Support Network at heart.org/SupportNetwork.

Do you have questions for your doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write down your questions for the next time you see your health care professional.

For example:

Will I always have to take medicine?

What should my blood pressure be?

MY QUESTIONS:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk for heart disease, manage your condition or care for a loved one. Visit heart.org/AnswersByHeart to learn more.



American Heart Association®

Check. Change. Control.®

Consequences of High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is often the first domino in a chain or “domino effect” leading to devastating consequences, like:



STROKE

HBP can cause blood vessels in the brain to burst or clog more easily.



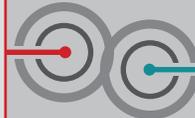
VISION LOSS

HBP can strain the vessels in the eyes.



HEART FAILURE

HBP can cause the heart to enlarge and fail to supply blood to the body.



HEART ATTACK

HBP damages arteries that can become blocked.



KIDNEY DISEASE/ FAILURE

HBP can damage the arteries around the kidneys and interfere with their ability to effectively filter blood.



SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION

This can be erectile dysfunction in men or lower libido in women.



A simple blood pressure check is the first step to preventing the “domino effect.”

Learn more at heart.org/hbp.



How Can I Reduce High Blood Pressure?

By treating high blood pressure, you can help reduce your risk for a stroke, heart attack, heart failure and kidney failure.

These are steps you can take now:

- Reach and maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a heart-healthy diet that includes vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, poultry, fish, legumes, non-tropical vegetable oils and nuts. It should also limit sodium, sweets, saturated fats, sugar sweetened beverages and red meats.
- Be more physically active.
- Don't smoke and avoid secondhand smoke.
- Limit alcohol to no more than one drink per day for women or two drinks a day for men.
- Take your medication as prescribed.
- Know what your blood pressure should be and work to keep it at that level.



How can I lose weight?

In order to lose weight, you need to use up more calories than you eat and drink every day. Talk with your health care professional about a healthy eating and physical activity plan that will help you reach your weight loss goals. When you lose weight, your blood pressure often goes down! An initial weight loss goal of at least 5% will help reduce your blood pressure.

How do I limit sodium?

Aim for an ideal limit of less than 1,500 milligrams (mg) per day of sodium. Even cutting back by 1,000 mg a day can help improve your blood pressure and heart health.

You can reduce your sodium intake by:

- Reading the Nutrition Facts label on foods so you know how much sodium is in food products. Foods with 140 mg or less sodium per serving are considered low in sodium.
- Avoiding prepackaged, processed and prepared foods, which tend to be higher in sodium.

- Reducing salt in cooking and at the table. Learn to use herbs and salt-free spices instead.

How do I limit alcohol?

Ask your health care professional if you're allowed to drink alcohol, and if so, how much.

If you drink more than two drinks a day if you're male or more than one drink a day if you're female, it may add to high blood pressure. One drink is equal to 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits or 1 ounce of 100-proof spirits.

If cutting back on alcohol is hard for you to do on your own, ask about groups that can help.

How can I be more active?

Regular physical activity helps to reduce blood pressure, control weight and reduce stress. It's best to start slowly

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How Can I Reduce High Blood Pressure?

and do something you enjoy, like taking brisk walks or riding a bicycle.

Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity (or a combination of both) per week. Talk to your health care professional about a good plan for you.

What should I know about medication?

Depending on your risk and blood pressure levels, you may need one or more types of medication to keep your blood pressure at a healthy level. You may need a trial period before your doctor finds the best medication, or combination of medications, for you.

What's most important is that you take your medication exactly as prescribed. Never stop treatment on your own. If you have problems or side effects from your medication, talk to your health care professional.



HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

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- 2 Sign up for our monthly *Heart Insight* e-news for heart patients and their families at [HeartInsight.org](https://www.heartinsight.org).
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Do you have questions for your doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write down your questions for the next time you see your health care professional.

For example:

Can I drink any alcohol?

How often should I check my blood pressure?

MY QUESTIONS:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk for heart disease, manage your condition or care for a loved one. Visit [heart.org/AnswersByHeart](https://www.heart.org/AnswersByHeart) to learn more.

What Can I Do To Improve My High Blood Pressure?

TARGET:BP™



	Modification	Recommendation	Approximate SBP Reduction Range
	Weight reduction	Maintain normal body weight (BMI=18.5-24.9 kg/m ²)	5 mm Hg
	DASH eating plan	Diet rich in fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy and reduced in fat	11 mm Hg
	Restrict sodium intake	<1500 mg of sodium per day	5-6 mm Hg
	Physical activity	Be more physically active. Aim for at least 90 to 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week.*	5-8 mm Hg
	Moderation of alcohol consumption	No more than 2 drinks/day for men and 1 drink/day for women	4 mm Hg

*Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities 2 or more days per week.

BP = Blood pressure, BMI = Body mass index, SBP = Systolic blood pressure, DASH = Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension

Best Proven Nonpharmacologic Interventions for Prevention and Treatment of Hypertension
According to 2017 Hypertension Clinical Practice Guideline

LOWER YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE:

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR APPOINTMENT WITH A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL.

GETTING READY

How often do you check your blood pressure?

- Every day
- About once a week
- About once a month
- Rarely
- Never

If you measure your blood pressure, do you keep a log?

- Yes
- No

Are you taking your medications as prescribed?

- Yes
- Usually
- Sometimes
- No

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

To get less salt in my diet, I'd like to (choose all that apply):

- Buy low sodium foods
- Taste before adding salt
- Use salt-free spices/herbs
- Check labels for sodium
- Cook at home more often

It's hard for me to manage my blood pressure because (choose all that apply):

- I don't like the way the medication makes me feel
- I'm having trouble getting my medication
- I'm having trouble changing my diet
- I can't easily exercise
- It's expensive
- I'm stressed/I don't feel well
- I forget what I need to do

During my appointment, I'd like to discuss (choose all that apply):

- My medications
- Checking my blood pressure at home
- Reducing salt in my diet
- Getting more exercise
- Managing my weight
- Quitting smoking

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

During your appointment, refer to this guide and have ready:

1. A complete list of all your medications (including over the counter, vitamins, and herbal supplements)
2. A pen and paper to take notes

Today my BP is:

-
- Normal
 - Elevated
 - Stage 1
 - Stage 2

Notes:

My next appointment is on:

_____ @ _____

How to measure your blood pressure at home

TARGET:BP™



Follow these steps for an accurate blood pressure measurement

1. PREPARE

Avoid caffeine, smoking and exercise for 30 minutes before measuring your blood pressure.

Wait at least 30 minutes after a meal.

If you're on blood pressure medication, measure your BP *before* you take your medication.

Empty your bladder beforehand.

Find a quiet space where you can sit comfortably without distraction.

2. POSITION



3. MEASURE

Rest for five minutes while in position before starting.

Take two or three measurements, one minute apart, twice daily for seven days.

Keep your body relaxed and in position during measurements.

Sit quietly with no distractions during measurements—avoid conversations, TV, phones and other devices.

Record your measurements when finished.

Content provided by



Self-measured blood pressure: Seven-day recording log

TARGET:BP™



Instructions: Complete the information below each time you take a measurement. It is best to take two measurements in the morning and two measurements in the evening for a week. If you miss any blood pressure measurements, leave that section blank and continue for the next time.

Content provided by
AMA | MAPBP™

Blood pressure arm: Left or Right (check one)

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
(Date)						
Morning ☀						
1 SYS _____ DIA _____ PULSE _____						
2 SYS _____ DIA _____ PULSE _____						
Notes						
Evening 🌙						
1 SYS _____ DIA _____ PULSE _____						
2 SYS _____ DIA _____ PULSE _____						
Notes						

For office use

Patient name: _____

Patient ID: _____

PCP: _____

SMBP average: _____ SYS / _____ DAY

Report back results by:

Appointment _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Patient Portal _____

Other _____

Important information

Please call your doctor's office if:

• Your blood pressure is above _____ SYS or _____ DIA

• Your blood pressure is below _____ SYS or _____ DIA

• You have symptoms that concern you or have a question about your blood pressure.



Self-measured blood pressure monitoring Loaner program agreement

FOR OFFICE STAFF

Lender information

Organization name

Address

Phone number

Patient information

Name

Patient ID

Preferred contact information (phone or email)

Equipment information

Device manufacturer and model

Device ID

Supplies (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BP cuff (variable size) | <input type="checkbox"/> BP cuff (XL) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carrying case | <input type="checkbox"/> Batteries _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Power cord | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Return by: _____/_____/_____
Month Day Year

- I agree to participate in the self-measured blood pressure device loaner program and follow the guidelines given to me.
- I agree to return this device in good working condition on or before its due date.

Patient signature

Date

