

High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is a condition where the pressure that blood applies to the inner walls of the arteries is too high. A diagnosis of high blood pressure requires 2 or more elevated readings on 2 or more occasions.

Category	Systolic Blood Pressure Top Number		Diastolic Blood Pressure Bottom Number
Normal	<120 mmHg	and	<80 mmHg
Elevated	120-129 mmHg	and	<80 mmHg
Stage 1 Hypertension	130-139 mmHg	or	80-89 mmHg
Stage 2 Hypertension	≥140 mmHg	or	≥90 mmHg

Risk

Increased pressure on the arteries, which carry blood from the heart to other organs and parts of the body, can lead to damage over time. If high blood pressure is left untreated or stays too high, it can lead to other health issues including heart attack, stroke, heart failure, kidney disease or failure, vision loss, sexual dysfunction, chest pain, and peripheral artery disease.

Medication

The goal of using medication is to lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of other health complications as noticed above. There are many medication options to lower blood pressure and your provider will work with you to choose the best option for you. Taking your medications correctly is an important part of treating high blood pressure. Talk with your pharmacist about ways to remember to take your medications.

Monitoring

Your provider may advise you to monitor your blood pressure at home to make sure your blood pressure is at or below the goal level. Talk with your pharmacist or health care provider about what monitor is best for you. It is important to talk with your health care provider if you are unsure what your specific blood pressure goal is as it may be different from what is outlined below.

Blood Pressure Goal
< 130/80 mmHg

It is important to be aware of signs and symptoms of your blood pressure being too high or too low.



Low Blood Pressure

Dizziness, lightheadedness, and blurry vision can be a sign that your blood pressure is too low. It is important to contact your doctor as your medications may need to be changed. A blood pressure reading of less than 90/60 mmHg is typically considered low.

High Blood Pressure

If your blood pressure suddenly becomes higher than 180 mmHg/120 mmHg wait 5 minutes and remeasure your blood pressure.

- If your blood pressure remains at or above that range and you are also experiencing severe headache, chest pain, or shortness of breath you should call 911 right away as these could be signs of a more serious condition and requires immediate attention.
- If your blood pressure remains at or above that range and you are not experiencing any symptoms, you should contact your provider right away.

Other things you can do

Lifestyle changes can help decrease your blood pressure and prevent serious health complications. Some helpful hints include the following:

- Follow a heart-healthy diet which should including limiting the amount of salt you eat
- Maintain a healthy weight or lose weight if you are overweight or obese
- Engage in regular physical activity since exercise can help decrease blood pressure
- If you smoke, get help to quit
- Limit alcohol consumption as excessive alcohol intake can increase blood pressure

Resources

1. American Heart Association (AHA). High Blood Pressure. <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). High Blood Pressure. <https://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/index.htm>
3. Mayo Clinic. High blood pressure (hypertension). <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/symptoms-causes/syc-20373410>