

What is Hypertension?

Hypertension (also called high blood pressure) is a health problem when your blood pressure stays high over time. Blood pressure is the force of your blood on the walls of your blood vessels as it moves through your body. Your doctor may diagnose you with hypertension if your blood pressure reads high for three or more readings in a row.

What problems can hypertension cause?

If your hypertension is not treated, it can cause:



- Heart attack
- Heart failure
- Chest pain
- Stroke
- Damage to your blood vessels
- Kidney disease
- Loss of vision
- Sexual problems

How can I avoid hypertension?

There are also several healthy habits you can do to avoid high blood pressure and lower your blood pressure. Follow these tips to try to keep your blood pressure in check:



Check your blood pressure regularly



Keep a healthy weight for your height



Eat healthy foods



Exercise 150 minutes per week or 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week



Find healthy ways to cope with stress



Cut down on salt



Cut back on caffeine



Limit how much alcohol you drink



Quit smoking or using smokeless tobacco

If you have questions, talk to your :

- Doctor
- Insurance company

Checking My Blood Pressure

A blood pressure test result has 2 numbers. You might hear someone say “124 over 84” or you might see it written like this: “124/84.” The 1st number is the amount of pressure when your heart beats and pumps blood. It is always the higher number. This is called systolic pressure. The 2nd number is the pressure when your heart relaxes between beats. It is always the lower number. This is called diastolic pressure.

How do I know if my blood pressure is high?

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic mm Hg (upper number)		Diastolic mm Hg (upper number)
Normal	Less than 120	and	Less than 80
Elevated	120-129	and	Less than 80
Hypertension Stage 1	130-139	or	80-89
Hypertension Stage 2	140 or higher	or	90 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis (consult your doctor right away)	Higher than 180	and/or	Higher than 120

Source: American Heart Association

How do I check my blood pressure?



1. Buy a blood pressure monitor. You can get one at most pharmacies. Some grocery stores have blood pressure monitors you can use for free.



2. Before taking your blood pressure, sit for 5 minutes with your legs and ankles uncrossed.



3. Place the cuff on your bare skin (not over your clothes) and raise your arm to the level of your heart.

2-3x

4. Take your blood pressure 2 to 3 times to make sure you are getting the right reading.



5. Check your blood pressure 2 times a day:
 - In the morning before you eat or take your medicines
 - In the evening before going to bed



6. Keep a log of your blood pressure to show your doctor.