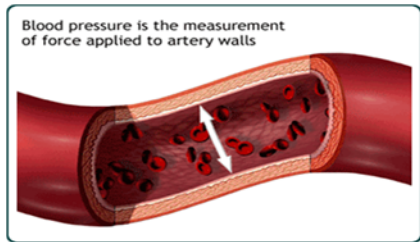


What is Blood Pressure?

High blood pressure is also known as hypertension. Blood pressure (BP) is the pressure of the blood against your blood vessel walls. Your BP goes up and down throughout the day, but if it is up for a long time, it can cause serious health problems.

When measuring your own BP, make sure you know what to do if it is too high or if you don't feel well. Know when to seek emergency treatment. Make a plan with your provider or nurse before you begin home blood pressure monitoring.



Why is Normal Blood Pressure Important?

High blood pressure increases your risk for dangerous health conditions:

- **First heart attack:** About 7 of every 10 people having their first heart attack have high blood pressure.
- **First stroke:** About 8 of every 10 people having their first stroke have high blood pressure.
- **Chronic (long lasting) heart failure:** About 7 of every 10 people with chronic heart failure have high blood pressure.

Although you cannot control all risk factors for high blood pressure, you can take steps to [prevent](#) or [control](#) high blood pressure and its complications.

Choosing a Home Blood Pressure Monitoring Device

- Upper arm blood pressure monitors are most accurate.
- Some blood pressure monitors take measurements from your wrist and finger. These are less accurate. These are not recommended.
- Some monitors have larger displays. These are easier to read.
- Some monitors can connect with your smart phone. These can track your blood pressure readings.
- Always purchase a monitor that has the correct size cuff for your arm.

Additional Resources

DASH eating plan: nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/public/heart/dash_brief.pdf

Exercise: cdc.gov/physicalactivity/index.html

Weight control: cdc.gov/healthyweight/index.html

Limiting alcohol use: cdc.gov/alcohol

Quitting smoking: cdc.gov/tobacco

Electronic recording blood pressure measurements: <https://www.ccctracker.com/aha>



Updated October 2017



Supported by Cooperative Agreement # DP0055493-01. Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to South Heartland District Health Department



UNDERSTANDING BLOOD PRESSURE AND YOUR GOALS

Self-Measured Blood Pressure Monitoring

BLOOD PRESSURE NUMBERS

What Do They Mean?

ELEVATED BLOOD PRESSURE

What Steps can you take?

Lifestyle Changes that can Reduce Blood Pressure

Reduce weight
↓ 5-20 mmHg



Adopt DASH Eating Plan
↓ 8-14 mmHg



Lower Sodium Intake
↓ 2-8 mmHg



Physical activity
↓ 4-9 mmHg



Moderation of Alcohol Consumption
↓ 2-4 mmHg



Quit Smoking
↓ 2-4 mmHg



Blood Pressure Category	Systolic mm Hg (upper #)		Diastolic mm Hg (lower #)
Normal	less than 120	and	less than 80
Elevated	120 - 129	or	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 (Emergency care needed)	Higher than 180	or	Higher than 120

SOURCE: AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION, INC.

Addressing High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1

- Adopt key lifestyle changes to bring your BP down to a healthier range
- Practice these lifestyle changes by building new, healthier habits
- Take a medication if one is prescribed for you
- Common first medication is a thiazide or 'water pill'/diuretic
- Recheck with provider in 3 months or as you are prescribed

Addressing High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2

- Focus efforts toward lifestyle changes to bring BP down to a healthier range
- Build new habits and consider working with a coach or the American Heart's ccctracker.com/aha
- Take medications that are prescribed to lower your BP
- Recheck with provider in 2 weeks or as you are prescribed

Adjust and Recheck

- Commit to lifestyle and medication changes
- Set and achieve goals and watch your numbers improve