

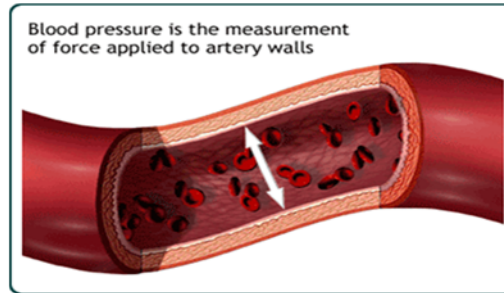
## What is Blood Pressure?

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 doctor or nurse before you begin home blood pressure monitoring.

### Always Measure Accurately

- Avoid checking your blood pressure if you have eaten a big meal, exercised, smoked, used caffeine or taken decongestants in the past 30 minutes.
- Use the bathroom before you begin.
- Sit quietly for five minutes in a comfortable position.
- Sit in a chair with back support.
- Sit with your legs uncrossed and your feet flat on the floor or a step stool.
- Support your arm on a table or other surface at heart level.



Blood Pressure Readings	
Normal	< 120 / <80
Elevated	120-129/ <80
High	130 /80 or higher

### Additional Resources

Weight control: [cdc.gov/healthyweight/index.html](http://cdc.gov/healthyweight/index.html)

Exercise: [cdc.gov/physicalactivity/index.html](http://cdc.gov/physicalactivity/index.html)

DASH eating plan: [nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/public/heart/dash\\_brief.pdf](http://nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/public/heart/dash_brief.pdf)

Limiting alcohol use: [cdc.gov/alcohol](http://cdc.gov/alcohol)

Quitting smoking: [cdc.gov/tobacco](http://cdc.gov/tobacco)



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## KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

### Self-Measured Blood Pressure Monitoring

# What are your numbers?

## Blood pressure numbers and how to read them

### Steps for measuring your blood pressure:

**#1**-Find a BP Machine



If you don't have access to a quality home monitor, look for a kiosk at your local pharmacy, grocery store, or provider's office.

**#2**-Get Seated and Still



Sit quietly for five minutes before taking blood pressure. Place cuff directly on skin, keep both feet on the floor, and relax while taking your blood pressure.

**#3**-Record your numbers and compare to the chart

**#4**- Share your numbers with your health care provider. Bring them to your appointment or use the portal anytime.



If your blood pressure is high, work with your healthcare professional to bring your blood pressure numbers down. High blood pressure can put you at serious risk for stroke and heart disease.

### How to read your blood pressure numbers

**Systolic Pressure**

**Diastolic Pressure**

- Healthy blood pressure levels are below 120/80
- Readings at or above 120/80 could potentially lead to health risks
- Many things can cause a rise in blood pressure, such as exercise and coffee.

Test blood pressure multiple times to ensure accuracy.

**Every 10 point drop in systolic blood pressure reduces your risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke by 30-50%**

