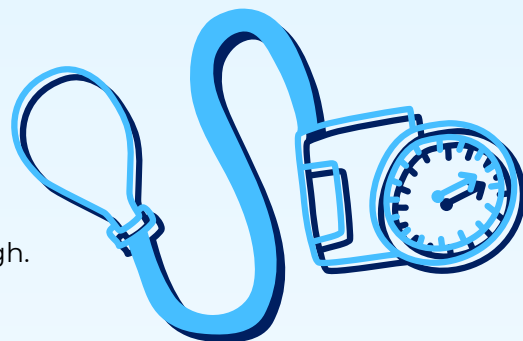


# HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION)

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Per the American Heart Association, high blood pressure happens when the force of the blood pushing against the walls of blood vessels is too high.



## WHAT DO THE NUMBERS TELL US?

- Systolic (top number/larger number) - how much force is in your blood vessels when the heart beats (pumps)
- Diastolic (bottom number) - how much force is in your blood vessels when the heart rests (in between beats)

## WHAT DO THE NUMBERS MEAN?

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 DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY)	HIGHER THAN 180	AND/OR	HIGHER THAN 120

## HOW DOES HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE EFFECT HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE?

High blood pressure causes damage to the walls of blood vessels because of the pressure it puts on them. Most of the time the damage happens over time by unknown or untreated high blood pressure.

- **Heart attack/stroke** - occurs when artery hardening/thickening blocks blood flow, damaging heart or brain tissue.
- **Heart failure** - occurs when high blood pressure thickens heart walls, reducing its ability to pump enough blood for the body.
- **Kidney disease or failure** - occurs when narrowed arteries impair blood filtration.
- **Vision loss** - occurs when high pressure damages eye vessels.
- **Sexual dysfunction** - occurs when vessel damage from high blood pressure causes erectile dysfunction in men and lowers libido in women.
- **Memory trouble/Dementia** - occurs when blocked arteries reduce blood flow to the brain, affecting memory and comprehension.

## SO, NOW WHAT?

- Check your blood pressure regularly (as often as your doctor recommends).
- See your doctor yearly.
- Know your numbers (blood pressure, BMI or waist circumference, cholesterol & triglycerides).
- Start making lifestyle changes that help lower blood pressure.
  - Eat a well-balanced diet high in fruits, veggies, and whole grains while low in fatty processed foods.
  - Reduce salt (sodium) in your diet– 2300 mg/day for most people and ideally 1500 mg/day for most adults, especially those who have high blood pressure. Read labels, including serving size, to calculate sodium intake.
  - Exercise at least 150 minutes/week of moderate cardio exercise, ideally divided into 30 mins/day, 5 days/week.
- Avoid nicotine (smoking/chewing/vaping), including secondhand smoke.
- Moderate alcohol consumption– men 1-2 drinks/day, women 0-1 drinks/day. 1 drink = 12 oz of beer, 5 oz of wine, 1.5 oz of hard liquor.
- Reduce stress and build a great support system.

### SOURCES: