

What do **Blood Pressure** numbers tell us?

- **Systolic (top number/larger number)** - how much pressure is in your arteries when the heart beats (pumps)
- **Diastolic (bottom number)** - how much pressure in in the arteries when the heart rests (in between beats)



What do the numbers mean?

BLOOD PRESSURE CATERGORY	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

7 Symptoms of Hypertension

Many times people with high blood pressure (HBP), also known as hypertension, have no symptoms at all. Even dangerously high blood pressure can have no symptoms.

Occasionally high blood pressure cause symptoms of:

- Headaches
- Shortness of breath
- Nosebleeds

These symptoms normally don't happen until blood pressure is severe or life-threatening.

How High Blood Pressure Effects Health & 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 overtime by unknown or untreated high blood pressure.

- **Heart attack or stroke**- hardening/thickening of the arteries prevents blood flow to heart or brain causing damage to tissue
- **Heart failure**- high pressure in blood vessels makes the heart pump harder. That causes the walls of the heart to thicken. This leads to the heart not being able to pump enough blood to give the body what it needs
- **Kidney disease or failure**- weakened and narrowed arteries in the kidneys keeps them from filtering the blood properly
- **Vision loss**- stress on the eye vessels caused by increased pressure in them causes damage which leads to vision loss.
- **Sexual dysfunction**- erectile dysfunction happens in men with high blood pressure because of damage to the vessels. This same type of damage can lower libido in women
- **Memory trouble/Dementia**- narrowed and blocked arteries limits the amount of blood flow to the brain which may cause trouble remembering and understanding concepts. Stroke from high blood pressure also causes this due to damage to brain tissue.

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. Ready labels including serving size to figure sodium.
 - Exercise at least 150 minutes/week of moderate cardio exercise ideally divided 30 mins/day 5 days/week
- Avoid nicotine (smoking/chewing/vaping) including second hand 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:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/symptoms-causes/syc-20373410>

<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/health-threats-from-high-blood-pressure>

<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/changes-you-can-make-to-manage-high-blood-pressure/shaking-the-salt-habit-to-lower-high-blood-pressure>