

Hypertension



Blood travels through your body in blood vessels like arteries. Your blood pressure measures how much force your moving blood puts on your artery walls.

What are the risks of high blood pressure?

Nearly half of American adults have high blood pressure. Sometimes we don't know exactly what causes it, but your health care team can help look for reasons. These may include stress from daily life, untreated sleep apnea, or problems with the kidneys or adrenal glands. If high blood pressure is not treated, it can raise your risk of:

- Coronary Artery Disease
- Diabetes
- Erectile Dysfunction
- Eye Problems
- Heart Attack
- Kidney Failure
- Stroke
- Other Organ Damage

How is blood pressure measured and what do the numbers mean?

Blood pressure is checked by placing a cuff around your arm and filling it with air to gently squeeze your arm while the flow of blood is measured. The result is written as two numbers such as 120/70. The top number (systolic pressure), shows how hard your heart pushes blood when it beats. The bottom number (diastolic pressure), shows the pressure when your heart relaxes between beats.

- One high blood pressure reading does not mean you have high blood pressure, but it is a sign to have it checked more often.

Visit TargetBP.org for tips to get an accurate blood pressure reading.

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 your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

Information gathered from the [American Heart Association](http://AmericanHeartAssociation.org).

How to Lower Blood Pressure and Keep it Low

High blood pressure cannot be cured, but it can be controlled.

- Check your blood pressure a few times a week at different times of the day. Write down your readings and any symptoms, and share them with your health care team to see if they may be related.
- Find ways to relax and manage stress.
- Limit alcohol and drink more water.
- Limit salty foods.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Quit smoking or decrease use of nicotine.
- Start with small amounts of exercise. Any activity is better than none. Choose things you enjoy and include a mix of aerobic activity and strength exercises.
- Take your medication as directed by your health care team.

Eating to Lower Blood Pressure

The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) plan is a simple, heart-healthy way of eating you can follow for life.

It recommends:

- Eating vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.
- Including fat-free or low-fat dairy products, fish, poultry, beans, nuts, and vegetable oils.
- Limiting foods high in saturated fat, like fatty meats, full-fat dairy products, and tropical oils (coconut, palm kernel, and palm oils).
- Limiting sugary drinks and sweets.
- Reducing sodium by avoiding salty and processed foods and checking food labels.

The Benefits: Lowers blood pressure & LDL "bad" cholesterol.

 **Eat This**

 **Limit This**

 Vegetables	 Fatty meats
 Fruits	
 Whole grains	 Full-fat dairy
 Fat-free or low-fat dairy	
 Fish	 Sugar sweetened beverages
 Poultry	
 Beans	 Sweets
 Nuts & seeds	
 Vegetable oils	 Sodium intake

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH

Scan this QR code for DASH diet recipes.

