

What you need to know about High Blood Pressure

# Hypertension Facts



## What is High Blood Pressure?

High Blood Pressure (HBP) is a serious condition that can lead to coronary heart disease, heart failure, stroke, kidney failure and other health problems. "Blood pressure" is the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries as the heart pumps blood. If this pressure rises and stays high over time, it can damage the body in many ways.

## What is a normal blood pressure?

The table below shows normal blood pressure numbers for adults. It also shows which numbers put you at greater risk for health problems.

## How is Blood Pressure Measured?

Blood pressure is measured as systolic (sis-TOL-lik) and diastolic (di-a-STOL-ik) pressures. "Systolic" refers to blood pressure when the heart beats while pumping blood. "Diastolic" refers to blood pressure when the heart is at rest between beats. You will most often see blood pressure numbers written with the systolic number above or before the diastolic number, such as 120/80. To measure your blood pressure, your doctor or nurse will use some type of a gauge, a stethoscope and a blood pressure cuff, around your arm.

Category	Systolic (top number)		Diastolic (bottom number)
Normal	Less than 120	and	less than 80
Pre-hypertension	120-139	or	80-89
High blood pressure Stage 1	140-159	or	90-99
High blood pressure Stage 2	160 or higher	or	100 or higher

*The ranges in this table apply to most adults aged 18 and older who don't have a short-term serious illness. If you have Chronic Kidney Disease or Diabetes, High Blood Pressure (HBP) is defined as 130/80 or higher. HBP numbers for children and teens are different than this table. For more information on Blood Pressure measurements in Children, see the "Helpful Websites" section at the end of this article for a reference to NHLBI's "A Pocket Guide to Blood Pressure Measurements in Children".*

**Over half of all Americans age 60 and older have High Blood Pressure.**

**A health coach can help you meet your healthy lifestyle goals**

**Call a TML IEBP Professional Health Coach at 1-888-818-2822**

Disclaimer: This material is for informational purposes only and should not be used to replace professional medical advice. Always consult your physician before beginning a new treatment, diet or fitness program. This information should not be considered complete, nor should it be relied on in diagnosing or treating a medical condition.

## Helpful Websites

**The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)**  
[www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

This website has lots of helpful resources to learn more about High Blood Pressure, including:

- A Pocket Guide to Blood Pressure Measurement in Children
- Your Guide to Lowering High Blood Pressure
- DASH (Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension) Eating Plan
- My Blood Pressure Wallet Card
- Physical Activity and Your Heart
- Smoking and Your Heart

### Medline Plus

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/highbloodpressure.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/highbloodpressure.html)

This website has lots of helpful resources to learn more about High Blood Pressure, including:

- A Medical Encyclopedia of information related to High Blood Pressure
- Related Topics to High Blood Pressure
- Pictures & Photographs
- Tutorials & Videos

### American Heart Association

[www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/High-Blood-Pressure\\_UCM\\_002020\\_SubHomePage.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/High-Blood-Pressure_UCM_002020_SubHomePage.jsp)

This website has lots of helpful resources to learn more about High Blood Pressure, including:

- Articles related to High Blood Pressure
- HBP risk calculator
- Illustrations & Animations related to High Blood Pressure
- Videos related to High Blood Pressure

# Hypertension Facts

## (High Blood Pressure)

### What are the risk factors for High Blood Pressure?

Certain traits, conditions and habits, can raise your risk for HBP. The major risk factors for HBP are:

- **Mature Age**  
Over half of all Americans age 60 and older have High Blood Pressure.
- **Race/Ethnicity**  
HBP can affect anyone, however it is more common in African American adults than in Caucasian or Hispanic adults.
- **Overweight or Obesity**  
You are more likely to develop prehypertension or HBP if you are overweight.
- **Gender**  
More men have HBP than women.
- **Unhealthy Lifestyle Habits**  
Many unhealthy lifestyle habits can raise your risk for HBP, including: Eating too much salt, drinking too much alcohol, not getting enough physical activity, smoking, not getting enough potassium in your diet.
- **Family History**  
You have a higher risk of developing HBP if a member of your family has HBP.
- **Long-Lasting Stress**  
Being under long-term stress due to job, lifestyle, financial or family issues can increase your risk to develop HBP.



### How do I live with High Blood Pressure successfully?

If you have HBP, you will need to treat and control it for life. This means making lifestyle changes, taking prescribed medications and getting ongoing medical care.

- Treatment can help control blood pressure, but it will not cure HBP.
- If you stop treatment, your blood pressure and risk for related health problems will rise.
- You should take all blood pressure medication that your doctor prescribes.
- Know the names and doses of your medications and how to take them.
- If you have questions about your medications, talk with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Make sure you refill your medications before they run out.
- Take your medications exactly as your doctor directs—don't skip days or cut pills in half.
- If you are having side effects from your medications, talk with your doctor. He or she may need to adjust the doses or prescribe other medications.
- You shouldn't decide on your own to stop taking your medications.
- Keeping track of your blood pressure is important. Have your blood pressure checked on the schedule that your doctor advises. You may want to learn how to check your blood pressure at home. Your doctor can help you learn how to do this. Each time you check your blood pressure you should write it down in a log, with the date and time of day.
- In order to get an accurate blood pressure reading, people with a large arm circumference should use a large blood pressure cuff. Keep this in mind when checking blood pressure in stores or when purchasing your own.

### How is HBP Treated?

High Blood Pressure is treated with lifestyle changes and medications.

#### Lifestyle changes include:

- Following a healthy diet
- Being physically active
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Quitting smoking
- Managing stress and learning how to cope with stress

Ask your doctor about what medications may be right for you to help reduce HBP if healthy lifestyle changes alone don't lower your blood pressure into a normal range.