

Hypertension

What To Know



Keeping hypertension, or high blood pressure, in check requires regular tracking and lifestyle adjustments.

Checking Your Blood Pressure

Keep a record of your blood pressure self-checks. This will help you and your doctor make the most educated decisions about your treatment plan.

Your blood pressure is recorded as two numbers:

- **Systolic blood pressure (the top number)** – The systolic reading, or the top number, is the pressure your blood is pushing against your artery walls when your heart beats.
- **Diastolic blood pressure (the bottom number)** – The diastolic reading, or the bottom number, is the pressure in the arteries when the heart rests between beats.

Preventive Measures*

Preventative measures don't just lower blood pressure, they also increase effectiveness of drugs used to treat hypertension. To help keep your blood pressure in check, take preventive measures like:

☐ Exercise more often with at least 150 minutes of aerobic exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise a week

☐ Eat a healthy diet that's low in salt

☐ Limit your alcohol intake
→ 2 drinks/day for men
→ 1 drink/day for women

☐ Quit smoking

☐ Manage stress

☐ Maintain a healthy weight

☐ Work with your doctor

Things to Note

If your blood pressure reading is particularly high, wait 2 or 3 minutes and then repeat the test. Blood pressure can rise simply as a reaction to cold temperatures, walking, or having a full bladder.

*These guidelines are provided by the American Heart Association (AHA) and are not intended to be substituted for advice given by a physician or licensed health-care professional.

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Content sourced from the AHA Understanding Blood Pressure Readings <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure>

What Do Your Blood Pressure Numbers Mean?

Measured in mmHg	Systolic (top number)	Diastolic (bottom number)
Normal	Below 120	Below 80
Elevated	120 – 129	Below 80
High Blood Pressure (Stage 1)	130 – 139	80 – 89
High Blood Pressure (Stage 2)	Above 140	Above 90
Hypertensive Crisis **consult a doctor immediately**	Above 180	Above 120