

Blood Pressure: *Take The Pressure Off By Knowing The Basics*

What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure has two numbers. The top number is the **Systolic** Blood Pressure (SBP) and indicates the force of which blood pumped from the heart hits the artery walls. The bottom number is the **Diastolic** Blood Pressure (DBP) and shows the force as the heart relaxes between contractions.

What is the American Heart Association recommendation for healthy blood pressure?

This chart reflects blood pressure categories defined by the American Heart Association. Often the cause of high blood pressure is unknown. However, there are several risk factors that can increase the likelihood of developing high blood pressure.

What are High Blood Pressure Risk factors?

Family history – parents or close blood-relatives have high blood pressure

Advanced age – blood vessels lose flexibility with age

Lack of physical activity – increases risk of high blood pressure and other factors such as obesity

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic mm Hg (upper #)	&	Diastolic mm Hg (lower #)
Normal	less than 120	&	less than 80
Pre-hypertension	120-139	o r	80 – 89
High (Hypertension) Stage 1	140-159	o r	90 – 99
High (Hypertension) Stage 2	160 or higher	o r	100 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis (Emergency care needed)	Higher than 180	o r	Higher than 110

Poor Diet – high in sodium and low in nutritional value increases risk

Gender – after age 64, women have a higher risk

Obesity – excess weight can strain the heart, raise blood cholesterol levels

Alcohol – too much consumption can raise blood cholesterol levels and contribute to other diseases

How do we manage high blood pressure?

- Medications – ACE Inhibitors, ARBs, Beta blockers
- Weight reduction – maintain a normal body mass index
- Diet – rich in fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy products, reduced saturated and total fat
- Physical activity – regular exercise such as walking (approved by provider)
- Moderation of alcohol consumption – limit to no more than 2 drinks per day

High blood pressure can increase your risk for other health concerns such as heart disease or stroke.

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