

Why is Blood Pressure Measured in mm Hg?

The abbreviation mm Hg means millimeters of mercury. Mercury is the standard unit of measurement for pressure.

Changes That Matter:

- ▶ Eat a well-balanced diet low in salt
- ▶ Limit alcohol use
- ▶ Enjoy routine physical activity
- ▶ Manage stress
- ▶ Maintain a healthy weight
- ▶ Quit smoking if a smoker
- ▶ Take your medications as prescribed



Are you at a Higher Risk of Developing HBP?

There are risk factors that increase your chances of developing HBP. Some you can control, and some you can't.

Risks that can be controlled are:

- ▶ Cigarette smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke
- ▶ Diabetes
- ▶ Being obese or overweight
- ▶ High cholesterol
- ▶ Unhealthy diet
- ▶ Physical inactivity

Factors that cannot be modified or are difficult to control are:

- ▶ Family history of high blood pressure
- ▶ Race/ethnicity
- ▶ Age
- ▶ Gender (males)
- ▶ Chronic kidney disease

Facts

- ▶ In 2020, more than 670,000 deaths in the United States had hypertension as a primary or contributing cause.
- ▶ Nearly half of adults in the United States (47%, or 116 million) have hypertension.
- ▶ Roughly 1 in 4 adults with hypertension have their condition under control.
- ▶ Roughly half of adults with uncontrolled hypertension have a blood pressure of 140/90 mmHg or higher.
- ▶ 50% of men and 44% of women have high blood pressure.
- ▶ High blood pressure is more common in non-Hispanic black adults (56%) than in non-Hispanic white adults (48%), non-Hispanic Asian adults (46%), or Hispanic adults (39%).
- ▶ Blood pressure control is higher among non-Hispanic white adults (32%) than in non-Hispanic black adults (25%), non-Hispanic Asian adults (19%), or Hispanic adults (25%).

References:

Blood pressure fact sheets. www.heart.org. (2021, September 9). Retrieved September 22, 2022, from <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/find-high-blood-pressure-tools--resources/blood-pressure-fact-sheets>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, July 12). *Facts about hypertension.* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved September 22, 2022, from <https://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/facts.htm>

This brochure is intended to promote healthy habits. It is not intended as a substitute for medical advice or professional care. Before making changes to your diet or exercise, consult your health care provider.



Blood PRESSURE



Everything You
Need to Know



Blood Pressure

The way to know if you have high blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is to have your blood pressure tested. Understanding your results is key to controlling high blood pressure.

Blood Pressure Numbers and Their Meaning

Your blood pressure is recorded as two numbers:

- ▶ **Systolic blood pressure** (the first number) – specifies how much pressure your blood is exerting against your artery walls when the heart beats.
- ▶ **Diastolic blood pressure** (the second number) – specifies how much pressure your blood is exerting against your artery walls while the heart is resting between beats.

Which Number is more Important?

Usually, more attention is given to systolic blood pressure (the first number) as a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease for people over age 50. In most individuals, systolic blood pressure rises gradually with age because of the increasing stiffness of large arteries, long-term buildup of plaque and an increased incidence of cardiac and vascular disease.



Healthy and Unhealthy Blood Pressure Ranges

< $\frac{120}{80}$

Normal

Blood pressure numbers of less than 120/80 mm Hg are considered within the normal range. If your results fall into this category, be consistent with heart-healthy habits like following a balanced diet and getting regular exercise.

$\frac{120-129}{<80}$

Elevated

Elevated blood pressure is when readings steadily range from 120-129 mm Hg systolic and less than 80 mm Hg diastolic. Individuals with elevated blood pressure are more likely to develop high blood pressure unless steps are taken to control the condition.



High Blood Pressure Can Impact your Health and Quality of Life

Damage done from high blood pressure (HBP) happens over time. Left undetected or uncontrolled, high blood pressure can lead to:

- ▶ **Heart attack**
HBP damages arteries that can become blocked and prevent blood flow to the heart muscle.
- ▶ **Stroke**
HBP can cause blood vessels that supply blood and oxygen to the brain to become blocked or burst.



$\frac{130-139}{80-89}$

Hypertension Stage 1

Hypertension Stage 1 is when blood pressure steadily ranges from 130-139 mm Hg systolic or 80-89 mm Hg diastolic. At this stage of high blood pressure, physicians are probable to prescribe lifestyle changes and may think about adding blood pressure medication based on your risk of heart attack or stroke.

> $\frac{140}{90}$

Hypertension Stage 2

Hypertension Stage 2 is when blood pressure steadily ranges at 140/90 mm Hg or higher. At this stage of high blood pressure, physicians are probable to prescribe a combination of blood pressure medications and lifestyle changes.

> $\frac{180}{120}$

Hypertensive crisis

This stage of high blood pressure requires medical attention. If your blood pressure readings surpass 180/120 mm Hg, wait five minutes, and then check your blood pressure again. If your readings are still unusually high, contact your doctor

- ▶ **Kidney disease or failure**
HBP can damage the arteries around the kidneys and interfere with their ability to filter blood effectively.



- ▶ **Heart failure**
HBP can cause the heart to enlarge and fail to supply blood to the body.

- ▶ **Vision loss**
HBP can strain or damage blood vessels in the eyes.



- ▶ **Sexual dysfunction**
HBP can lead to erectile dysfunction in men and may contribute to lower libido in women.