

High blood pressure affects 1 in every 3 adults



What does high blood pressure mean for you?

What can you do to take control?

High blood pressure raises your risk of a stroke or heart attack. You can lower that risk.

Use this guide to:

- ✓ Talk with your healthcare professional about high blood pressure.
- ✓ Find out your goal blood pressure from your healthcare professional.
- ✓ Learn steps you can take to reach your goal blood pressure.

What is high blood pressure?

Blood pumps from your heart through blood vessels. When you have high blood pressure, the force of the blood pumping through your blood vessels is too high.



READING YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

120



The top number is your **SYSTOLIC** blood pressure. It is measured when your heart is *pumping*.

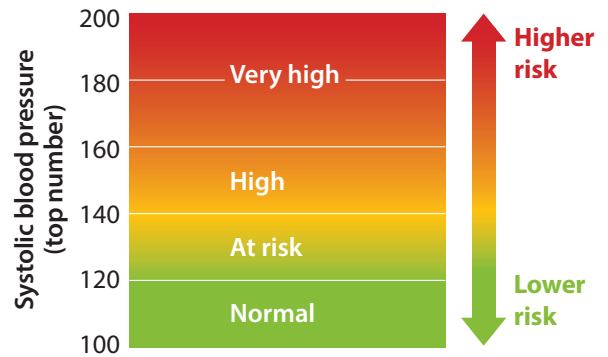
80



The bottom number is your **DIASTOLIC** blood pressure. It is measured when your heart is *relaxing*.

Why is high blood pressure important?

If you have high blood pressure for many years, it can increase your risk of stroke and heart attack and can damage your kidneys.



Your current and goal blood pressures

Your blood pressure today:

_____ Date: _____

Your blood pressure in the past:

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Your goal blood pressure: _____

My blood pressure today and my goal blood pressure don't match. Now what?

You can do many things to lower your blood pressure. For some people, lifestyle changes are enough. For most people, blood pressure medications are also needed to reach their goals.


Turn the page for steps you can take to lower your blood pressure.



Steps you can take to lower your blood pressure

Talk with your healthcare professional about the steps below. Together, you can choose to make one change or to make several changes at once. The blood pressure reductions presented here are estimates. These steps may affect each person's blood pressure differently.

Get a cheerleader! Talk about your plans with family and friends. They can help you make changes to lower your blood pressure.

Take this step	Reduce your systolic blood pressure by...	Plan your goals	Steps I want to take
Limit how much alcohol you drink	2–4 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For women: Limit to 1 drink per day. ✓ For men: Limit to 2 drinks per day. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lower the amount of salt (sodium) you eat	2–8 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Avoid canned or salty foods. ✓ Don't add salt to foods. ✓ Read nutrition labels. Try to eat less than 2,400 mg of salt (sodium) daily. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exercise	4–9 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Exercise at least 30 minutes on most days of the week. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lose weight	5–20 points depending on weight loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Exercise (<i>see above</i>). ✓ Eat healthy. Make a plan with your healthcare professional (<i>see below</i>). 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eat healthy	8–14 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Avoid fried foods. ✓ Choose chicken or turkey instead of beef. ✓ Eat lots of fruits and vegetables. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Take blood pressure medication*	9–10 points for each medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Talk with your healthcare professional about whether a medication is right for you. 	<input type="checkbox"/>

* For most people, this step gives the best results for reducing systolic blood pressure (the top number).

Turn the page for information about blood pressure medications.



Blood pressure medications

- There are many types of medications that can treat high blood pressure.
- Each medication works in a different way. Using more than 1 medication might work better than using just 1.
- Generic medications are just as effective as brand-name medications and cost less.

How do I know I have the right blood pressure medication?

If all these things are true:

- ✓ Your blood pressure is at your goal.
- ✓ You have no bad side effects.
- ✓ You can afford to fill the prescription for your blood pressure medication.

Do generic medications work?

Yes. They have the **same quality** and **same safety** as brand-name medications.

- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) inspects and approves medications, including generics.
- What is different about generic medications?
 - The name.
 - Generic medications cost less than brand-name medications.
 - The color or shape may be different.

How do I know if the changes I make to lower my blood pressure are working?

The best way is to track your blood pressure over time.

- Your healthcare professional will take your blood pressure at each visit.
- You can also use a blood pressure cuff at home or at your local pharmacy.



If you and your healthcare professional decide to use a blood pressure medication, fill in the chart below with your healthcare professional.

My medication is: _____

Generic name (if different): _____

This medication is a: brand name generic

Drug type: _____

Side effects I can watch for: _____

If I experience a side effect, I can: _____

If the medication is too expensive, I can: _____

I will pick up my medication from this pharmacy: _____

Sometimes medications work better as a team. Your healthcare professional may recommend taking more than 1 medication to lower your blood pressure.

This is 1 of _____ medications I take for my blood pressure. My other blood pressure medications are:

Turn the page to track your blood pressure over time.



Use this chart to track your blood pressure readings

By tracking your blood pressure, you can see if you are making progress toward your goals.

Your goal blood pressure: _____

Your blood pressure readings:

_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____

Sources:

The Seventh Report of the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure; Independent Drug Information Service recommendations; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations.

Sponsorship: The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) funded the creation of this guide. No pharmaceutical company was involved in the creation of this guide.

