

Hypertension is a serious condition

High blood pressure is a serious condition. About one in three adults may have high blood pressure but many are unaware because most have no symptoms. The effects of high blood pressure can last a lifetime. Blood vessels can be damaged, leading to heart and kidney disease.

Blood pressure is measured as systolic and diastolic pressures. Systolic measures the force against the artery walls as the heart contracts to force blood through the body.

Diastolic measures the force against the arteries when the heart relaxes between beats. You will see blood pressure numbers

written with the systolic number above or before the diastolic number, such as 120/80 mmHg.

Knowing your blood pressure numbers is important, even when you're feeling well. Blood pressure doesn't stay the same all the time. It changes with activity and sleep, or when you're excited or anxious. Health problems can develop if your blood pressure numbers are above normal most of the time.

If your blood pressure numbers put you into a prehypertension category, lifestyle changes can help delay or prevent the progression of high blood pressure.

If you take blood pressure medicine, and your blood pressure readings are within the normal range, you still have hypertension, but it is controlled by the medicine. Be sure to continue taking your medicine as prescribed, follow the treatment plan and see your doctor regularly.

If you have diabetes or other health conditions, or if you are a child/teenager, your doctor may recommend a different blood pressure goal for your individual situation.

Category	Systolic		Diastolic
Normal	less than 120	and	less than 80
Prehypertension	120-139	or	80-89
High blood pressure			
Stage 1	140 – 159	or	90 – 99
Stage 2	160 or higher	or	100 or higher

Healthy lifestyle habits can help you maintain normal blood pressure.

- Limit sodium (salt) intake to less than 1,500 milligrams per day for most adults
- Limit alcohol consumption to no more than two drinks per day for men, and no more than one drink per day for women
- Keep physically active and maintain a healthy weight
- Manage your stress
- Don't smoke

