



Know your numbers: Your Blood Pressure



When your blood pressure (BP) is checked you are told two numbers. The first number is the pressure when your heart beats. This is called *systolic* pressure and is the “top” number. The other number you are given is the *diastolic* pressure or the pressure when your heart is resting between beats. This is the “bottom” number. Both numbers are important.

What do the numbers mean?

Once you know your blood pressure numbers, you need to know if it is in the healthy range or if it is too high. The following chart will explain what the numbers mean and what you can do to get your BP where you want it.

Top Number		Bottom Number	What it means	What can you do
under 120	and	under 80	Normal BP in a healthy range	Follow a healthy lifestyle plan; eat healthy and perform physical activity.
120 - 139	or	80 - 89	Pre-hypertension or close to high BP	Follow a healthy lifestyle plan. Eat healthy and limit your salt intake. Exercise and lose weight if needed.
140 - 159	or	90 - 99	Stage 1 high BP (Hypertension)	Follow a healthy lifestyle plan. Eat healthy and limit your salt intake. Exercise and lose weight if needed. Take all medications as directed by your healthcare provider.
160 or higher	or	100 or higher	Stage 2 Hypertension	Follow a healthy lifestyle plan. Eat healthy and limit your salt intake. Exercise and lose weight if needed. Take all medications as directed by your healthcare provider.

Remember...

- 1) Check your blood pressure regularly
- 2) Maintain a healthy weight; lose weight if you are overweight
- 3) Exercise every day
- 4) Eat a healthy diet full of fruit and vegetables and low in salt and fat.
- 5) Take time to relax and control your stress

What is a Healthy Lifestyle?

- **Eat a healthy diet.** Try to get 4-5 servings of fruit and vegetables every day; eat more whole grain breads and cereals and avoid “enriched” products. Dairy products should be low or non-fat. Eat 1-2 servings of lean meat, poultry or fish per day. Limit sweets.
- **Watch your salt.** Salt causes your body to hold on to fluid and can cause your BP to go up. Try to eat low-sodium or no-added salt foods. Use herbs and salt-free spices instead of salt when cooking. Read labels since packaged and processed foods are usually VERY high in salt.
- **Be active.** Begin a regular exercise program (talk with your doctor first). Walking is a great exercise. Start slowly, even 5-10 minutes per day is a good start. Gradually increase to 30 minutes per day.
- **QUIT SMOKING!!!** Contact your Health Coach for information on how to quit.

- **Watch Your weight.** Change your eating habits, watch your portions, and get regular exercise. Being overweight increases the work your heart has to do to pump blood through your body. This can also cause high blood pressure. Getting to a healthy weight can help LOWER your blood pressure and lessen the chance you will get other conditions like diabetes and heart disease.
- **Control your stress.** Practice relaxation and breathing exercises to help manage your stress. Exercise is a good way to relieve stress.

Disclaimer: Information or education provided in this fact sheet is not intended to replace medical advice from your healthcare provider. The information provided on this fact sheet is not all-inclusive of this topic.

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