

What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is the pressure of blood in your arteries.

If it is too high over a period of time and is not treated you will be more at risk of having a stroke or heart attack.

High blood pressure usually has no symptoms which is why many people don't know they have it.

The only way to find out is to have regular checks and remember the numbers in the same way as your height and weight.



Blood pressure record

Use this space to keep a record of your blood pressure readings. Use the flow chart to the right to see what you need to do next. Keep it safe and get checked every 5 years unless instructed to get it checked sooner.

DATE/TIME	BP
e.g. 5:30pm 01/08/17	140/90

Need advice?

If you have a question or concern about your blood pressure, ask your practice or community pharmacy, or try:

www.happy-hearts.co.uk
www.nhs.uk search for 'blood pressure'
British Heart Foundation
 0300 330 3311
 (weekdays 9 to 5) or
BHF.org.uk
Blood Pressure UK
 020 7882 6218 or email
help@bloodpressureuk.org

B

No history of high blood pressure



Have or have had high blood pressure

This is a very good BP reading

Follow lifestyle advice in this leaflet.
Re-check BP within 5 years. 1

BP
 $<129/84$
 mmHg

BP very well controlled

- Continue BP management & annual checks as advised by own practice.
- Consider home BP monitoring.

This is a good BP reading

Follow lifestyle advice in this leaflet.
Re-check BP within 1 year. 2

BP
 $130/85$
 to
 $139/89$
 mmHg

BP well controlled

- Continue BP management & annual checks as advised by own practice.
- Consider home BP monitoring.

Note: BP targets are lower when monitoring BP at home and may be lower if the patient has other medical conditions (see overleaf)

This reading is raised, you may have high BP

Follow lifestyle advice, BUT if the lower BP number is 100 or higher, seek advice from own practice and lower BP before starting new physical activity.

Within 1 week: Seek repeat BP by local pharmacy, self-testing or the practice nursing team.

Within 1 month: Seek BP review at own practice if repeat BP within this range.

Note: A diagnosis cannot be made with a single reading. 3

BP
 $140/90$
 to
 $179/119$
 mmHg

BP not treated to target

If you are 80 years or older a BP of less than 150/90 mmHg is generally acceptable.

- Follow lifestyle advice, BUT if the lower BP number is 100 or higher, seek advice from own practice and lower BP before starting new physical activity.
- Continue BP management and monitoring (including home monitoring) as advised by own practice and community pharmacy.

Within 1 week: Seek repeat BP by local pharmacy, self-testing, or the practice nursing team

Within 1 month: Seek BP review at own practice

Note: If you have other conditions such as diabetes, chronic kidney disease or have had a stroke, your target BP may be lower.

Your BP reading is very high

Seek **MEDICAL REVIEW TODAY** even if no symptoms.

Seek **MEDICAL REVIEW IMMEDIATELY** if you have symptoms such as headache, blurred vision, chest pain, difficulty breathing, confusion, nose bleeds.

Do **NOT** start any new physical activity. 4

BP
 $180/120$
 mmHg
 or higher

Your BP is very poorly controlled

Seek **MEDICAL REVIEW TODAY** even if no symptoms.

Seek **MEDICAL REVIEW IMMEDIATELY** if you have symptoms such as headache, blurred vision, chest pain, difficulty breathing, confusion, nose bleeds.

Do **NOT** start any new physical activity.

Your blood pressure reading is very low

This may be normal for you. Seek review at your own practice if you have symptoms (e.g. light headedness, dizziness, feeling sick, blurred vision, generally feeling weak, confusion, fainting). 6

BP
 $90/60$
 mmHg
 or lower

Your blood pressure reading is very low

Seek review at your own practice if you have symptoms (e.g. light headedness, dizziness, feeling sick, blurred vision, generally feeling weak, confusion, fainting).

OTHER FINDINGS

Irregular pulse (new finding)

You may have an irregular heart rhythm.

Seek medical review within 48 hours (or by Monday if seen on a Friday) even if you have no symptoms.

Seek **IMMEDIATE** medical review if you have symptoms such as chest pain, breathlessness or palpitations. 5

Very fast or slow pulse

Most adults have a resting pulse rate of 60-100 beats per minute.

Slow pulse may be normal e.g. in athletes.

Seek review at your own practice if your pulse remains above 120 or below 40 beats per minute and this is a new finding.

Error reading

Cannot get a BP reading due to technical difficulties.

You can get your BP checked in an alternative setting e.g. community pharmacy or your own practice. 7

Note: BP management is tailored to meet patients' unique circumstances. Guidance for known BP patients (above) is intended as a general guide and does not replace advice of the patient's clinician.

F

High blood pressure usually has no symptoms which is why many people don't know they have it.

The only way to find out is to have regular checks.



Why is my blood pressure so important?

High blood pressure increases your risk of having a stroke or heart attack. It is also a risk factor for kidney disease, dementia and other illnesses.

If you have a raised blood pressure reading you should not ignore it. High blood pressure is a serious condition but can be successfully treated.

What causes high blood pressure?

Your lifestyle can affect your blood pressure. See the Healthy Lifestyle section opposite.

For most people there is no definite cause yet some things make it more likely:

♥ A family history of high blood pressure

♥ You are of African, Caribbean or South Asian descent

♥ Your age – blood pressure tends to go up as we get older

Happy Hearts

Blood Pressure



What do the numbers mean?

When you have your blood pressure measured it is written like this: 140/90 mmHg, which is said "140 over 90".

The first number occurs when your heart beats and pushes blood around your body.

The second occurs when your heart relaxes and fills with blood.



What should my blood pressure be?

An optimal blood pressure is 120/80 or less. You should aim to get your blood pressure to this level. 140/90 is the level used in clinic to diagnose high blood pressure, whatever your age. Home monitoring targets are slightly lower (less than 135/85).

If your blood pressure is consistently raised at this level or above, it will need to be lowered.



How can I lower my blood pressure?

You can lower your blood pressure by changing your lifestyle and, if necessary, by taking medication as directed by your practice or pharmacy.

Home blood pressure monitoring is effective and increasingly popular.

A few simple lifestyle changes can make all the difference



Eat more fruit and vegetables

These are the best source of potassium in the diet, which helps to lower blood pressure. Try to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Don't forget that frozen, canned and dried varieties count too.



Eat less saturated fat

A low fat diet and a healthy cholesterol level help to keep your heart happy.



Lose weight if you need to

If you lose the excess weight you will probably find that your blood pressure reduces.



Medication and Monitoring

Some people will also be prescribed medication (tablets) to lower their blood pressure.

Home blood pressure monitoring is popular and effective.



Eat less salt

An adult should eat less than 6g of salt a day. 75% of the salt we eat is "hidden" in our foods - make sure you check food labels for salt content and don't add it to your food.



Limit alcohol intake

Men and women are advised not to drink more than 14 units* a week on a regular basis and to spread this over three or more days.

*see www.nhs.uk for information on alcohol guidance



Be active

Aim for half an hour of exercise on five days of the week. The exercise needs to make you breathe faster and warm you up.



Stop smoking

To reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke.



Know your numbers and encourage your family and friends to do the same