Ask for a copy of "A Teenager's Guide to Living a Healthier Lifestyle" for more information on ways to improve your health.



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TEEN HEALTH



Blood Pressure

Have you ever had your blood pressure taken? If you did, a cuff was placed around your upper arm and pumped full of air.

Blood pressure is the force of blood against your blood vessel walls.

High blood pressure (hypertension) puts stress on your blood vessel walls and over time this could lead to:

- heart attack
- stroke
- kidney failure.

You may have high blood pressure and not even know it. Often there are no signs or symptoms of this dangerous condition.



Who is at Risk

You are at high risk if you:

- have close relatives who have high blood pressure
- are overweight
- do not exercise
- are African-American
- eat too much salt.

Your Blood Pressure

When your blood pressure is checked, the result is called a reading and is shown as two numbers.

- The top number (systolic) shows the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats.
- The bottom number (diastolic) shows the pressure in your arteries when your heart rests.

Your result will be one of the following levels:

- normal range
- borderline range (elevated)
- abnormal range (high blood pressure).

Your range is based on your gender, age and height.

What Can You Do

You can make lifestyle changes to help control high blood pressure. These include:

- eating a healthful diet
- getting regular physical activity
- maintaining a healthy weight
- not smoking.

If your blood pressure is still high after making lifestyle changes, your health care provider can help you make other changes to help lower your blood pressure.

If high blood pressure isn't treated, over time it could lead to heart attack, stroke or other problems.

