

How To Take Your Blood Pressure

General Information

Your blood pressure is checked with 2 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.

High blood pressure is also known as hypertension.

What You Need to Know Before You Check Your Blood Pressure

- Take your medicine(s) at least 30 minutes before checking your blood pressure.
- Try to avoid eating, smoking, having caffeine, exercising and drinking alcohol 30 minutes before you check your blood pressure.
- Try to use the same arm every time you check your blood pressure.
- If you have a dialysis shunt in one of your arms, do not use that arm to check your blood pressure.

- If you have had a mastectomy, do not use the arm on the same side as your surgery.
- If you have had a stroke, do not use the arm on the same side affected by your stroke.

Know What Your Blood Pressure Should Be

A normal blood pressure reading is less than 120 and less than 80. If you are taking medicine for high blood pressure and have heart disease, kidney disease, or have had a stroke, your blood pressure should be less than 130/80. If you have diabetes, your blood pressure goal is less than 139/89.

You and your health care provider will work together to help reduce your risk of more complications (problems).

See the chart below for general guidelines. Ask your health care provider about what is right for you.

(over)

General Guidelines for Adults

	Top number (systolic)		Bottom number (diastolic)	Follow-up instructions
Normal	less than 120	and	less than 80	Recheck your blood pressure once a year.
Elevated	120 to 129	and	less than 80	Talk with your health care provider about lifestyle changes.
High blood pressure (stage 1)	130 to 139	or	80 to 89	See your health care provider soon to talk about treatment.
High blood pressure (stage 2)	140 or higher	or	90 or higher	Call your health care provider today.

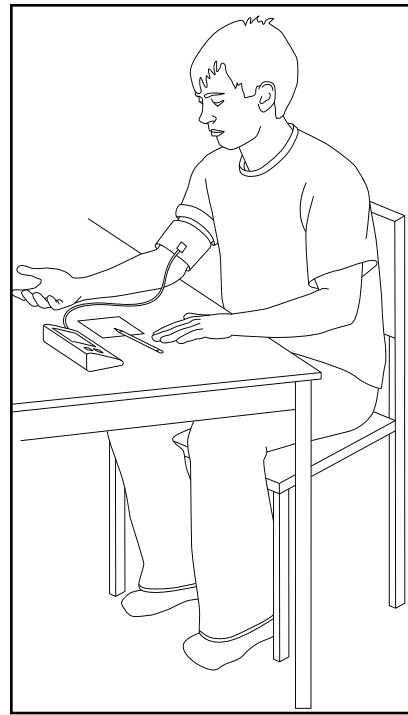
* If you have heart disease, your blood pressure goal is less than 130/80. If you have diabetes, your blood pressure goal is less than 139/89.

When to Check Your Blood Pressure

- The best time to check your blood pressure is when you are not under stress or in pain.
- Do your reading after sitting for 5 minutes with your feet flat on the floor.
- Check your blood pressure at the same time every day.

How to Check Your Blood Pressure

- Set your machine on a table in a quiet place. Be sure to choose a table upon which you can comfortably rest your upper arm at heart level.
- Wear a short-sleeve shirt or remove your shirt. Having the cuff on bare skin will help you get an accurate reading.
- Sit in a chair that has the right support for your back.
- Place the cuff on your upper arm one inch above the bend of your elbow as instructed in the user's guide. Make sure the cuff is not too large or not too small. You should be able to fit one finger under the cuff. If the Velcro® cuff pulls away, you need a bigger cuff.
- Make sure your arm lies flat on the table with the palm of your hand up. Your upper arm should be at heart level. If your upper arm is higher or lower than heart level, you will get an inaccurate reading.
- Put both feet flat on the floor.
- Rest for 5 minutes.
- Turn the machine on and follow the instructions on the machine (or in the user's guide).
- The machine will show your systolic (top) and diastolic (bottom) numbers.
- If you have a blood pressure reading that is higher than you expect, rest for 5 to 10 minutes and then take your blood pressure again.
- If your second blood pressure reading is still higher than you expected, follow the follow-up instructions in the table on the front side of this fact sheet based on your reading.



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It is important to use the correct sitting posture when taking your blood pressure.

- Write the date, time, blood pressure reading, which arm it was taken on, the heart rate or pulse and if you took your medicine. Bring this information with you when you go to your appointment with your health care provider.
- Turn the machine off.

Machine Care

- Keep the machine in its original container.
- Store the machine away from heat, cold and humidity. Do not keep it in the bathroom or near the kitchen sink.
- Keep the machine out of the reach of children.
- Have your machine checked at least once a year. Take it to your health care provider's office or local fire station.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use, clean and store the machine.
- If you cannot get an accurate reading, talk with your health care provider.

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