

Controlling High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure (hypertension) is common. In fact, **1 in 2 adults** in the U.S. have it, but many don't know they have it, and most don't have it under control. **Get into the habit of checking your blood pressure.**



Half of adults.



Early Treatment Matters

High blood pressure often doesn't have symptoms. Yet it's a leading cause of:

- Heart attack
- Heart failure
- Stroke
- Memory problems (dementia)
- Kidney disease
- Death

Know Your Numbers and What to Do





Blood pressure is given as one number over another:

- Systolic blood pressure is the first (top) number.
- Diastolic is the second (bottom) number.



Treating blood pressure is more than just getting to a certain number. It's about protecting your heart, brain and kidneys, and living longer.



Top number (mm Hg) Bottom number (mm Hg)	What the numbers mean	Possible treatment
 <p>Less than 120 – AND – Less than 80</p>	Normal	Healthy lifestyle choices Yearly blood pressure checks
 <p>120-129 – AND – Less than 80</p>	Elevated	Commit to lifestyle changes Re-check after 3-6 months or sooner
 <p>130-139 – OR – 80-89</p>	High (Stage 1) How likely you might be to develop heart disease or stroke will shape treatment (this is assessed using a risk score)	If you have a lower chance of heart disease, stroke: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step up lifestyle changes • Re-check after 3-6 months • Start medicines if still high If you have a higher risk of heart disease, stroke (and if you have heart disease, diabetes or kidney disease): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add medicines + lifestyle changes • Monthly visits, blood pressure checks until blood pressure is controlled
 <p>140 or higher – OR – 90 or higher</p>	High (Stage 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2+ different types of medicines (2-in-1 single combination pill if possible) • Lifestyle changes • Ongoing follow-up

Lifestyle Changes - Adopting Healthy Habits



Lose weight,
if needed



Focus on heart-healthy eating
(DASH diet)



Reduce salt (sodium)
(less than 1 tsp/day)



Lower stress



Get moving



Don't smoke
or vape



Avoid or
limit alcohol



Get quality
sleep

Blood Pressure Medications

Many people need to take medicine in addition to lifestyle changes. **These are usually the first medicines used to lower blood pressure:**



- **Thiazide diuretics** (water pills) help the body get rid of extra salt and water.
- **Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE)-inhibitors** OR **angiotensin receptor blockers (ARB)** work on a hormone system that controls blood pressure, helping blood vessels relax, decreasing blood pressure
- **Calcium channel blockers** help blood vessels relax and stay open.

Healthy lifestyle habits and medications work together to lower blood pressure.


Your health care team may add other medications based on your response, as well as your other health conditions. Keep in mind:







- Combination pills are often recommended if your blood pressure is over 140/90 mm Hg.
- It's important to review all the medicines you take, as some can increase blood pressure.

Talk with your care team about additional treatment options if your blood pressure remains high despite taking several medications..

How Much Can Healthy Habits Lower Blood Pressure?

If you have high blood pressure, adopting healthy habits can make a BIG difference.



Average lowering for systolic blood pressure (top number)	Lifestyle habits, choices
-4 to -6 mm Hg	 Avoiding or limiting alcohol
-4 to -10 mm Hg	 Staying active helps strengthen the heart and blood vessels At least 150 minutes of activity a week plus two days of muscle strengthening
-5 to -7 mm Hg	 Managing stress, meditating
-5 to -8 mm Hg	 Eating heart-healthy The DASH eating plan is naturally low in sodium, rich in potassium
-6 to -8 mm Hg	 Losing excess weight For every 2 pounds lost, -1 mmHg lowering
	 Cutting salt (sodium) Aim for less than 2,300 mg of sodium a day. Most sodium comes from foods like canned soups, breads, processed meats.



One study found reducing systolic blood pressure (top number) **10 points** lowered the chance of heart attacks and strokes by **20%**.



For more information, visit [CardioSmart.org/HighBP](https://www.heart.org/HighBP)