Understanding Blood Pressure

What is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of your blood moving against the walls of your arteries. It’s expressed as **TWO NUMBERS:**

- **TOP NUMBER**
  - The pressure or force in the arteries when the heart beats
  - **Systolic (mm Hg)**
  - **Diastolic (mm Hg)**

- **BOTTOM NUMBER**
  - The pressure measured between heart beats

**KNOW WHAT YOUR BP NUMBERS MEAN:**

- **NORMAL**
  - below 120
  - below 80

- **ELEVATED**
  - 120 to 139
  - 80 to 89
  - also called Prehypertension

- **HIGH**
  - 140 & above
  - 90 & above
  - also called Hypertension

Over time, elevated and high blood pressure can weaken your heart, blood vessels and kidneys, and makes a stroke or heart attack much more likely.

8 Lifestyle Changes for Lower Blood Pressure

1. **Get Moving**
   - with regular physical activity.

2. **Focus on Nutrition**
   - by making healthy food choices and minding your portion sizes.

3. **Cut the Salt**
   - Read food labels and aim for 1,500 mg of sodium or less per day.

4. **Take Your Meds**
   - If you are prescribed medicine for high blood pressure, take it every day.

5. **Check Your Blood Pressure**
   - as often as your doctor recommends.

6. **Lose Weight**
   - Losing just 10 pounds can make a big difference.

7. **Cut Back Alcohol/Don’t Smoke**
   - For men, not more than two drinks a day; for women, one. If you smoke, stop.

8. **De-stress and Sleep Well**
   - Relaxation can lower blood pressure, and quality sleep ups your energy.

Visit [www.CardioSmart.org/HighBP](http://www.CardioSmart.org/HighBP) to learn more today.