



What is **HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE**?

High blood pressure, also called hypertension, is a common condition that affects almost half of the adults in the United States. The heart uses pressure to move blood through the blood vessels, which deliver oxygen to the body’s organs. Blood pressure changes from minute to minute and from day to day. Stress, anxiety, and pain all briefly raise blood pressure, which is normal. However, if a person’s blood pressure stays high for a long time, this is not normal, and it can lead to disease.

How is blood pressure **MEASURED**?

There are two numbers in a blood pressure reading. The higher number, called systolic blood pressure, is the blood pressure when the heart is actively pumping. The lower number, called diastolic blood pressure, is the blood pressure when the heart is relaxed. A blood pressure reading is shown as the systolic number over the diastolic number. Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg). Most experts believe normal blood pressure is less than 120/80 mm Hg. Blood pressure above 130/80 mm Hg is considered high and may require treatment.

Blood Pressure Ranges			
Meaning	Systolic mm Hg (higher number)	and/or	Diastolic mm Hg (lower number)
Normal Blood Pressure	Less than 120	and	Less than 80
Elevated (High) Blood Pressure	120 - 129	and	Less than 80
Stage 1 Hypertension	130 - 139	or	80 - 90
Stage 2 Hypertension	140 or higher	or	90 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis	Higher than 180	and/or	Higher than 120

Why is it important to **TREAT HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE**?

Uncontrolled blood pressure can damage the brain, heart, eyes, and kidneys. High blood pressure is one of the most common causes of stroke, heart attack, kidney failure, and even death. Fortunately, these outcomes can be prevented if blood pressure is controlled through changes to diet, lifestyle, and medications. If you have high blood pressure, you should speak with your doctor to find out what treatments will work best for you.

What are the **SYMPTOMS OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?**

High blood pressure usually has no symptoms. Most people with high blood pressure don't know they have it until they go to the doctor for other reasons. Very high blood pressure (such as 180/110 mm Hg or higher) can cause severe headaches and vision problems.

How can I **IMPROVE MY BLOOD PRESSURE** (and prevent high blood pressure)?

There are many steps you can take to keep your blood pressure controlled. Talk to your doctor to see if you should make any of the following changes to control your blood pressure.



- **Improve your eating habits.** Eating less sodium, which is found in salt, can greatly improve blood pressure for many people. Processed, canned, and packaged food tends to be high in sodium and should be limited. Those with kidney or heart disease should eat less than 2300 mg of sodium daily, although less than 1500 mg is ideal. Eating more vegetables, fruits, and healthy grains can be helpful. The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan and the Mediterranean eating style include fruits, vegetables, and low-fat or nonfat dairy foods. Talk to your doctor before making changes to your eating habits.

» **Tip:** Visit [healthmapsolutions.com/patient-resources](https://www.healthmapsolutions.com/patient-resources) to find more information on healthy eating.



- **Exercise!** Doing activities such as brisk walking that increase your heart rate for 20 to 30 minutes each day is important for blood pressure control.
- **If you smoke, work on a plan to quit.** There are many resources available to help you make a plan and deal with the challenges of quitting. Talk to your doctor for more information on these resources.

- **Limit alcohol intake.**

- **Avoid nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)** such as ibuprofen or naproxen. NSAIDs, which reduce pain and inflammation, are known to increase blood pressure and can harm the kidneys, particularly when taken often. Many NSAIDs are available in stores without a prescription. Check the Active Ingredient list in the Drug Facts label to see if any of the medications you take at home contain NSAIDs.

- If you are overweight, **losing weight can lower your blood pressure.**

- **Check your blood pressure at home** and keep a log of your results. Bring your log sheet to your doctor appointments.

» **Tip:** Visit [healthmapsolutions.com/patient-resources](https://www.healthmapsolutions.com/patient-resources) to find a Blood Pressure Log Sheet. This will help you keep track of your blood pressure readings.



When are **MEDICATIONS** needed?

If your blood pressure stays above 130/80 mm Hg despite diet and lifestyle changes, you may need medications to help lower your blood pressure. Some people may only need one type of blood pressure medication, but others might need multiple medications to control their blood pressure. It is very important to take your medications as prescribed by your doctor, even if you feel well.

Some types of medications lower blood pressure and improve long-term kidney function. Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors and angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) are particularly useful to protect kidney function. Talk to your doctor to see if either is right for you.

How are **KIDNEY DISEASE** and **HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE** related?

High blood pressure is the second most common cause of kidney disease in the United States (after diabetes). Controlling blood pressure can help prevent kidney damage.



FOLLOW UP with your doctor

Managing high blood pressure is a life-long goal. Most people who have high blood need to continue treatment for the rest of their lives to stay healthy. Talking to your doctor regularly is very important to make sure your blood pressure treatments and medications are working well.

Healthmap Solutions is here to help people learn how to manage their blood pressure and improve their overall health. To learn more, call Healthmap at 1-800-481-0474 or visit patients.healthmapsolutions.com.

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References:

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