Understanding your blood pressure

Blood pressure is measured with two numbers. It is written with one number over the other. You can check your blood pressure at the doctor, at many pharmacies or at home.

The table above is for people who have not been told they have high blood pressure. If you were already told you have hypertension, your provider can help you set a goal that is right for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systolic</th>
<th>Diastolic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount of pressure in your arteries when your heart pumps blood</td>
<td>The amount of pressure in your arteries when your heart rests between heartbeats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Below 120 and Below 80</th>
<th>120 to 139 or 80 to 89</th>
<th>140 or higher or 90 or higher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal for most people</td>
<td>At risk (close to high blood pressure)</td>
<td>High blood pressure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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High blood pressure is dangerous

1 in 4 adult New Yorkers have high blood pressure.

Many other New Yorkers have high blood pressure, but don’t know it.

• High blood pressure (hypertension) can be overlooked because there are usually no symptoms. But it can cause stroke, heart attack and early death.

• Checking your blood pressure regularly helps you know if there is a problem.

• Groups more likely to have high blood pressure include people aged 65 and older, Blacks and Latinos.
You can help prevent/control high blood pressure

Whole grains, fruits and vegetables are best. Avoid processed foods.

Read nutrition labels and try to limit your sodium (salt) to 2,300 mg a day.

Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.
Women: No more than 1 drink/day.
Men: No more than 2 drinks/day.

Get moving (walking counts!) for at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

Quit smoking, since it increases your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Every day is a new opportunity to make a healthy choice. Don’t give up!
Working toward these goals helps you lead a longer, healthier life.
Sticking with your medications matters

Take your medications, if prescribed. Some people stop taking their high blood pressure medications or skip doses because:

- They don’t feel sick.
- They’re worried about being able to afford it.
- They’re worried about side effects.
- Their blood pressure has started to improve.

Don’t skip doses or stop taking your medications. Medications can lower your risk for heart attack and stroke.

Talk to your health care provider and/or pharmacist if you have questions or concerns.

Check your blood pressure regularly. If your blood pressure is under control, your medications are working.
Resources

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Find Tools to Help Prevent and Lower High Blood Pressure

Visit nyc.gov/health and search high blood pressure

Find Help Quitting Smoking

Visit nyc.gov/health and search NYC Quits

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