

Understanding *Blood Pressure*

Blood pressure is the measurement of the force of blood on the walls of the arteries.

Top number = Systolic

(force when heart beats)

Bottom number = Diastolic

(force between heart beats)



Normal

- Less than 120
- Less than 80

Pre-High Blood Pressure

- 120-139
- 80-89

High Blood Pressure – Stage 1

- 140-159
- 90 – 99

High Blood Pressure – Stage 2

- 160 or higher
- 100 or higher

Steps to Follow

FOR AN ACCURATE MEASUREMENT

- Monitor at home with a digital monitor.
- Use left arm with correct size cuff.
- Rest and sit comfortably with back supported.
- Legs and ankles uncrossed.
- Monitor at the same time of day.
- Wait 1 hour after waking or exercise.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and tobacco.

Remember...

YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

- Can vary throughout the day and is often higher in the morning.
- Is affected by activity and rest.
- Also affected by temperature, diet, emotional state, posture, and medications.

RISK FACTORS FOR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

YOU ARE MORE AT RISK IF:

- You smoke.
- You are African-American.
- It runs in your family.
- You don't exercise regularly.
- You drink a lot of alcohol.
- You are overweight.
- You eat a lot of salty foods.
- You use decongestants, anti-inflammatory drugs, or steroids on a regular basis.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I MONITOR?

A FEW DAYS A MONTH if your blood pressure is well controlled.

MORE OFTEN if you just started home monitoring, have had medication changes, or have health problems.

CALL YOUR DOCTOR if your blood pressure is higher than normal.

Talk with your doctor about your specific needs and personal blood pressure goals.

NEVER stop taking prescribed medication or change your diet without your doctor's approval.



This document is meant for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace the advice of your doctor or other health care provider.

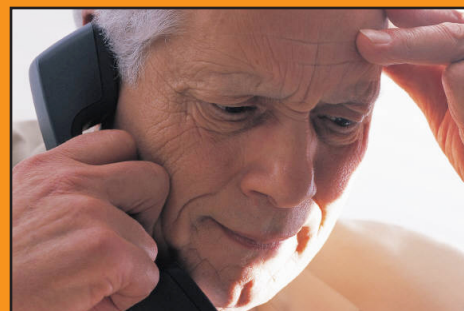
References

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CALL 911

When you have one or more symptoms:

- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Severe headache
- Shortness of breath
- A cold, clammy sweat
- A hard time walking with loss of balance
- Chest discomfort (pressure, pain, or fullness)
- Pain or weakness and numbness in leg, face, or arm
- Confusion; trouble understanding, seeing, or speaking