

What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is the pressure of blood in your arteries.

If it is too high over a period of time and is not treated you will be more at risk of having a stroke or heart attack.

High blood pressure usually has no symptoms which is why many people don't know they have it.

The only way to find out is to have regular checks and remember the numbers in the same way as your height and weight.



Blood pressure record

Use this space to keep a record of your blood pressure readings. Use the flow chart to the right to see what you need to do next. Keep it safe and get checked every 5 years unless instructed to get it checked sooner.

DATE/TIME	BP
e.g. 5:30pm 01/08/17	140/90

Need advice?

If you have a question or concern about your blood pressure, information and advice can be provided by:

www.happy-hearts.co.uk

Blood Pressure UK
020 7882 6255

www.bloodpressureuk.org

www.nhs.uk

(search for 'blood pressure')

Your community pharmacy will also be able to help.



Note: BP management is tailored to meet patients' unique circumstances. Guidance for known BP patients (above) is intended as a general guide and does not replace advice of the patient's clinician.

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The only way to find out is to have regular checks.



Why is my blood pressure so important?

High blood pressure increases your risk of having a stroke or heart attack. It is also a risk factor for kidney disease, dementia and other illnesses.

If you have a raised blood pressure reading you should not ignore it. High blood pressure is a serious condition but can be successfully treated.

What causes high blood pressure?

Your lifestyle can affect your blood pressure. See the Healthy Lifestyle section opposite.

For most people there is no definite cause yet some things make it more likely:

♥ A family history of high blood pressure

♥ You are of African, Carribean or South Asian descent

♥ Your age – blood pressure tends to go up as we get older

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What do the numbers mean?

When you have your blood pressure measured it is written like this: 140/90 mmHg, which is said "140 over 90".

The first number occurs when your heart beats and pushes blood around your body.

The second occurs when your heart relaxes and fills with blood.



What should my blood pressure be?

A healthy blood pressure is 120/80 or less. You should aim to get your blood pressure to this level. 140/90 is the level used to diagnose high blood pressure, whatever your age.

If your blood pressure is consistently raised at this level or above, it will need to be lowered.



How can I lower my blood pressure?

You can lower your blood pressure by changing your lifestyle and, if necessary, by taking medication as directed by your doctor.

A few simple lifestyle changes can make all the difference



Eat more fruit and vegetables

These are the best source of potassium in the diet, which helps to lower blood pressure. Try to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Don't forget that frozen, canned and dried varieties count too.



Eat less saturated fat

A low fat diet and a healthy cholesterol level help to keep your heart happy.



Lose weight if you need to

If you lose the excess weight you will probably find that your blood pressure reduces.



Medication

Some people will also need to take medication prescribed by their doctor to lower their blood pressure.

Today's blood pressure tablets are very effective and can reduce your risk of stroke and heart attack.



Eat less salt

An adult should eat less than 6g of salt a day. 75% of the salt we eat is "hidden" in our foods - make sure you check food labels for salt content and don't add it to your food.



Drink alcohol in moderation

Men and women are advised not to drink more than 14 units* a week on a regular basis and to spread this over three or more days.

*see www.nhs.uk for information on alcohol guidance



Be active

Aim for half an hour of exercise on five days of the week. The exercise needs to make you breathe faster and warm you up.



Stop smoking

To reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke.



Know your numbers and encourage your family and friends to do the same

Back

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**Know your
numbers!**

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across Cheshire and Merseyside

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