



Take charge of your blood pressure:

A guide to home monitoring

High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure, also called hypertension, is when the force of blood pushing against your artery (a type of blood vessel) is consistently too high. Over time, this pressure can damage your heart, brain and kidneys.

High blood pressure may not have any signs or symptoms, but it can lead to serious health issues like stroke, heart attack and kidney disease if left untreated. If you already have kidney disease, high blood pressure could cause more damage to your kidneys.

If you have or are at risk of having high blood pressure, your doctor may tell you to monitor your blood pressure at home. Monitoring blood pressure at home can:

- Help your doctor confirm you have high blood pressure and catch any issues early on
- Prevent your risk of heart attack, heart disease or stroke
- Help your doctor know if your treatment plan is working
- Empower you to take charge of your health



The American Heart Association recommends an **automatic upper arm cuff-style monitor** to measure blood pressure. Talk to your doctor about choosing a home blood pressure monitor that is right for you.

How to take blood pressure at home

Follow these 4 easy steps to get an accurate reading:

1 Choose the right time:

Try to take your blood pressure at the same time every day. Ask your doctor how often you should take your blood pressure and at what time of day. People with high blood pressure may need to measure it more often than those who do not.

2 Before the reading:

- Sit and rest quietly in a comfortable chair for at least 5 minutes in a calm and safe environment.
- Avoid food, caffeine, tobacco, alcohol, or smoking for at least 30 minutes
- Use the bathroom. A full bladder may slightly raise your blood pressure.

3 During the reading:

- Sit on a chair with your back straight and supported, feet flat on the floor (don't cross your legs).
- Rest your arm on a flat surface (like a table) at heart level. Usually there is not a big difference between readings on either arm, however it is good practice to always use the same arm when taking your blood pressure.
- Use a cuff that fits your upper arm properly and place it on bare skin – not over clothing.
- Try to stay still, quiet and avoid using your phone or distractions.
- Take 2-3 readings, 1 minute apart, and write down the average.

4 After the reading:

- Write down your numbers in a tracker or log.
- Include the date, time, and any notes.
- Bring your tracker or log to your appointments to share your numbers with your healthcare professional.

Understanding your numbers

Blood pressure is recorded as **two** numbers:

- ⬆ **Systolic** is the **top** number – it measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats.
- ⬇ **Diastolic** is the **bottom** number – it measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart rests between beats.

Category	Systolic (top number)	and/or	Diastolic (bottom number)
NORMAL	Less than 120 mm Hg	and	Less than 80 mm Hg
ELEVATED	120 – 129 mm Hg	and	Less than 80 mm Hg
HYPERTENSION STAGE 1	130 – 139 mm Hg	or	80 – 89 mm Hg
HYPERTENSION STAGE 2	140 or higher mm Hg	or	90 or higher mm Hg
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS	Higher than 180 mm Hg	and/or	Higher than 120 mm Hg



Note: Talk to your doctor about what a normal blood pressure is for you. Some people, like those with kidney disease, diabetes or older adults may have different ranges to aim for.

Act immediately

- ➔ If your blood pressure is higher than **180/120 mm Hg** (hypertensive crisis), wait 5 minutes and take it again. If it's still high, call your doctor right away.
- ➔ **Call 911** if you have any chest pain, trouble breathing, trouble speaking, numbness, or blurry vision. These can be signs of possible organ damage and need immediate medical attention.



High blood pressure can lead to a stroke, heart attack, and/or serious kidney damage. **Don't wait** – getting help fast can protect your heart, brain and kidneys.

Track your blood pressure numbers

Tracking your blood pressure is a key part of managing your health. Regular monitoring can help you and your doctor stay informed about your health and can help to better manage your blood pressure and create a treatment plan that works for you.

Blood Pressure Tracker

NAME: _____

Record your blood pressure readings on the table below. The first row shows an example of how to use this tracker. Don't forget to take it with you to your medical appointments so you can share and discuss with your doctor and healthcare team.

Example:	Date	Time	Systolic (top number)	Diastolic (bottom number)	Notes
	Monday, January 1	8:00 AM	128 mm Hg	78 mm Hg	Before breakfast

Blood Pressure Tracker

NAME: _____

Date	Time	Systolic (top number)	Diastolic (bottom number)	Notes

