

# Blood pressure and kidney health

*High blood pressure is a common cause of kidney disease and can make kidney disease worse.*

**Blood pressure** is the force of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries (blood vessels) as your heart pumps.



## High blood pressure and your kidneys

- **High blood pressure, also known as hypertension,** is a condition where the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your arteries is consistently too high. Your heart is working too hard to pump blood.
- **High blood pressure can cause kidney disease.** When blood flows too forcefully through the tiny blood vessels in your kidneys, it can hurt or weaken these tiny vessels. Over time, this can lead to kidney disease.
- **Kidney disease can cause high blood pressure.** Healthy kidneys help control your blood pressure. When your kidneys don't work well, they don't do a good job controlling your blood pressure.

## Taking your blood pressure

- A blood pressure test uses an inflatable, upper-arm cuff to measure how hard your heart is working to pump blood when your heart beats and rests.
- Tests can be done at your doctor's office, at some pharmacies, or even at home. Early monitoring and treatment are key to lowering your risk for heart and kidney problems. Guidelines suggest starting treatment earlier if you have a heart disease risk of 7.5% or higher.
- It's important to regularly check your blood pressure at home. This can help you and your doctor track your progress and ensure your medicine is working.
- You can even use telehealth support to share your readings with your healthcare team.



## What's healthy?



**120/80**

<120/80 (120 over 80)  
or less is considered healthy  
for most people.



**130/80**

>130/80 (130 over 80)  
or more is too high.

# Know your numbers. Protect your kidneys.



## Take your medicine every day, as directed

- Skipping doses of your medicine can be harmful to your health.
- If your doctor told you to take medicine to lower your blood pressure, take your medicine exactly how your doctor told you to.



## Follow a heart-healthy diet

- DASH Diet: Consider following the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet. This eating plan focuses on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins
- Limit salt. Eat less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium (salt) per day.
- Limit unhealthy fats. Eat less than 13mg saturated fat per day and avoid trans fats (found on a nutrition label).
- Eat nutrient-rich foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- If you have kidney disease, talk to your doctor before using potassium-based salt substitutes, as they can cause potassium levels to become too high.



## Do not smoke or use tobacco

- Smoking raises your blood pressure and can make kidney disease worse.
- Get advice from your doctor about how to quit.



## Exercise most days of the week

- Exercise is important for heart health.
- Set a goal to exercise for 30 minutes a day, 5 days per week.
- Be creative! Try walking, dancing, or playing a sport.



## Keep a healthy weight

- Even losing just a few pounds can make a big difference for your health.
- Talk to your doctor about how much you should weigh.



## Limit alcohol

- Drinking too much can increase your blood pressure.
- Men should have no more than 2 drinks per day, women should have no more than 1 drink per day.



## Reduce stress

- Stress can raise your blood pressure.
- Work with your doctor to learn ways to manage and cope with stress.

