Improving Blood Pressure

Knowing your numbers and tracking your results over time can alert you to any changes, help you detect patterns, and reveal if the changes you’ve made are working. Learn more about improving blood pressure with the American Heart Association, visit: www.heart.org/HBP.

High blood pressure (or hypertension) is when the force of blood flowing through your blood vessels is consistently too high. This can hurt your heart, lungs, arteries and veins and could cause a heart attack, stroke and other health problems. But, with good treatment and management, you can control your blood pressure to help you live a long and healthy life.

Know Your Numbers

The best way to know if you have high blood pressure is to have it checked. Nearly half of American adults have high blood pressure...and many don’t even know they have it, because most of the time there are no obvious symptoms.

Your blood pressure is recorded as two numbers - Systolic/Diastolic:

- **Systolic** blood pressure is the first number (upper number) and shows the pressure of the blood against the artery walls when the heart beats.
- **Diastolic** blood pressure is the second number (lower number) and shows the pressure of the blood against the artery walls when the heart is resting.

Visit LoveYourHeartSD.org to:

1. Know Your Numbers and What They Mean
2. Get Active and Manage Stress
3. Eat a Healthy Diet and Reduce Sodium
4. Quit the Smoking and Alcohol Habit
5. Find free blood pressure screenings, virtual events, tips and activities for Love Your Heart Week of Action

Scan QR Code to visit LoveYourHeartSD.org

Submit your blood pressure results during Love Your Heart Week of Action!

February 12-20
Receive a free face mask!
How to Measure Blood Pressure

Rest for at least 5 minutes. Sit comfortably in a quiet place, back supported, with legs uncrossed and your feet flat on the floor. Don’t smoke, exercise, drink caffeinated beverages or alcohol within 30 minutes of testing.

Check the cuff size and fit. The bottom of the cuff should be approximately 1/2 inch above the inner elbow.

Remove thick clothing from the upper arm area of your left arm.

The air tube should rest against the inner elbow and ensure your arm is resting on a firm surface.

Press “START/STOP” Button to start testing. Sit calmly and don’t talk while measuring. Take at least two readings, 1 min apart.*

Blood Pressure Guidelines

Is your blood pressure in a healthy or an unhealthy range? Know your numbers by checking your blood pressure and monitor it regularly to show patterns or changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Systolic Blood Pressure (mmHg)</th>
<th>Diastolic Blood Pressure (mmHg)</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Follow-Up Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>&lt;120 And &lt;80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Re-check yearly or as recommended by doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevated</td>
<td>120-129 And &lt;80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Follow up with your doctor within 3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertension, Stage 1</td>
<td>130-139 Or 80-89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Follow up with doctor within 1 month; call 211 if you do not have insurance to find a community health center near you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertension, Stage 2</td>
<td>≥ 140 Or ≥ 90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Follow up with doctor immediately; call 211 if you do not have insurance to find a community health center near you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertensive Urgency*</td>
<td>≥ 180 ≥ 120</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>(chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness/weakness, change in vision or difficulty speaking)</td>
<td>Follow up with doctor immediately; call 211 if you do not have insurance to find a community health center near you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertensive Emergency*</td>
<td>≥ 180 ≥ 120</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>(chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness/weakness, change in vision or difficulty speaking)</td>
<td>Call 911 or go to the Emergency Department</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And remember to be active, eat healthy and don’t smoke! Visit LOVEYOURHEARTSD.org to learn more.

*Note: If your blood pressure suddenly exceeds 180/120, wait five minutes and then test your blood pressure again. If your readings are still unusually high, contact your doctor immediately. If your blood pressure is higher than 180/120 and you are experiencing chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness/weakness, change in vision or difficulty speaking, do not wait to see if your pressure comes down on its own. Call 911.

Love Your Heart is sponsored by the County of San Diego and the following organizations:

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