

# HOW TO MANAGE BLOOD PRESSURE

## 1. Understanding Readings

The first step to managing blood pressure is to understand what the levels mean and what is considered normal, elevated, high blood pressure (hypertension) and hypertensive crisis.

Blood pressure is typically recorded as two numbers written as a ratio like this:

**117**  

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**76**

Read as "117 over 76 millimeters of mercury."

### Systolic

The top number, the higher of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats (when the heart muscle contracts).

### Diastolic

The bottom number, the lower of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart is resting between heart beats.

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom number)
Normal	Lower than 120	<i>and</i>	Lower than 80
Elevated Blood Pressure	120-129	<i>and</i>	80
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1	130-139	<i>or</i>	80-89
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2	140 or higher	<i>or</i>	90 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis (Call your doctor immediately)	Higher than 180	<i>and/or</i>	Higher than 120

## 2. Track Levels

### CHECK. CHANGE. CONTROL.

Health care providers can take blood pressure readings and provide recommendations. Check. Change. Control. helps you track your process in reducing blood pressure.

Track online at [manageyourbp.org/](https://manageyourbp.org/)

## 3. Tips for Success

### EAT SMART

Eat a healthy diet of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, legumes, nuts, plant-based proteins, lean animal proteins and fish. Limit sodium, saturated fats and added sugars. Limit sugary food and drinks, fatty or processed meats, refined carbohydrates and highly processed foods.

### MOVE MORE

Physical activity helps control blood pressure, weight, and stress levels.

### MANAGE WEIGHT

If you're overweight, even a slight weight loss can reduce high blood pressure.

### DON'T SMOKE

Everytime you smoke, vape, or use tobacco, the nicotine can cause a temporary increase in blood pressure.

### SLEEP WELL

Short sleep (less than 6 hours) and poor quality sleep are associated with high blood pressure.