

High Blood Pressure

What is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your arteries. Each time your heart beats, it pumps out blood into the arteries. Your blood pressure is highest when your heart beats, pumping the blood. This is called systolic pressure. When your heart is at rest, between beats, your blood pressure falls. This is called diastolic pressure.

Learn What Your Numbers Mean!

Your blood pressure reading uses these two numbers, the systolic and diastolic pressures. They are written one above or before the other. For example, a blood pressure of 120/80 mmHg (millimeters of mercury) is spoken as “120 over 80.”

A reading of

- 120/80 or lower is normal blood pressure
- 140/90 or higher is high blood pressure (hypertension)
- 120 to 139 for the top number, or 80 to 89 for the bottom number is pre-hypertension.

What is High Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure rises and falls during the day. When blood pressure stays higher over time, it is called high blood pressure, and it makes your heart work harder.

What are the Symptoms of High Blood Pressure?

It almost never has symptoms, but if high blood pressure is uncontrolled for years, it can cause stroke, heart failure, heart attack, kidney failure, and blindness.

How Do I Control High Blood Pressure?

You can control high blood pressure with a healthy lifestyle and medicines, if needed. Anyone can develop high blood pressure, and about one-third of American adults have it.



For more information call Customer Service at **(415) 615-4555**.
Or visit **www.healthysanfrancisco.org**

Diagnosis

You can find out if you have high blood pressure by having your blood pressure checked regularly. Once you have it, it often lasts a lifetime.

If your reading is between 120/80 and 139/89 mmHg, then you have *pre-hypertension*. This means that you don't have high blood pressure now, but may develop it in the future.

Some people have higher blood pressure in a provider's office than they do the rest of the time. You can find out if this is true for you by taking your blood pressure reading in a pharmacy, or using a home blood pressure cuff. You should write down the results and share them with your provider.

Prevention and Treatment

Lifestyle changes can prevent and control high blood pressure:

- Lose weight if you are overweight (losing 10 pounds can make a big difference)
- Be active (walking 30 minutes per day can help)
- Follow a healthy eating plan with plenty of fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, and foods with less salt
- If you drink alcohol, drink less.

If lifestyle changes alone are not enough, there are many blood pressure medicines to help you.

Adapted from:

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/highbloodpressure.html