

Blood Pressure

What do your numbers mean?

What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is like the pressure of water in a hose. If there is a kink or narrowing of the hose, the pressure inside will increase. The same applies to your blood vessels.

When your heart pumps blood out into your system, it creates pressure inside the vessels. If the blood pressure is too high, this could ultimately affect your heart and vital organs. A healthy blood pressure is generally considered to be under 120/80.

What do those numbers mean?

The **first** number is called **systolic blood pressure**, which means the pressure of the blood being pumped from your heart to your vessels. This can also be described as the pressure measured when your heart is contracting or pumping blood.

The **second** number is called **diastolic blood pressure**. This is the pressure measured between heartbeats. In other words, the period when your heart is not actively squeezing blood into your system.

Category	Systolic BP (1st number)	Diastolic BP (2nd number)
Normal	Less than 120	Less than 80
Elevated	120-129	Less than 80
Hypertension Stage I*	130-139	80-89
Hypertension Stage II*	More than 140	More than 90

* Your primary care provider will provide a hypertension diagnosis

When do I contact my primary care provider?

If your blood pressure is higher than 130/80 on more than one occasion or if you have not had your blood pressure measured in the past 2 years, please contact your primary care provider (doctor) for a checkup.