

Blood Pressure

What is blood pressure?



When your heart beats, it pumps blood round your body to give it the energy and oxygen it needs.

As the blood moves, it pushes against the sides of the blood vessels. The strength of this pushing is your blood pressure.

High blood pressure is the biggest known cause of disability and premature death in the UK through stroke, heart attack & heart disease.

One in three adults in the UK has high blood pressure and every day 350 people have a preventable stroke or heart attack caused by the condition.



How you can tell if you have high blood pressure?

Having high blood pressure is not usually something that you feel or notice. It does not tend to produce obvious signs or symptoms.

The only way to know whether you have high BP is to have it measured



It is estimated that as many as 5 million people in the UK are walking around, undiagnosed, with high BP.

Blood Pressure Testing

You should visit your GP regularly & have your BP checked.



Blood Pressure Testing

The BP kit available here for your use is simple to use

- > Test when you are relaxed – select a quiet location
- > Sit on chair, straight back, feet flat on floor, arm bent at elbow resting on table
- > Put cuff round arm, air tube running down inside of forearm
- > Press on/off switch

That's it!



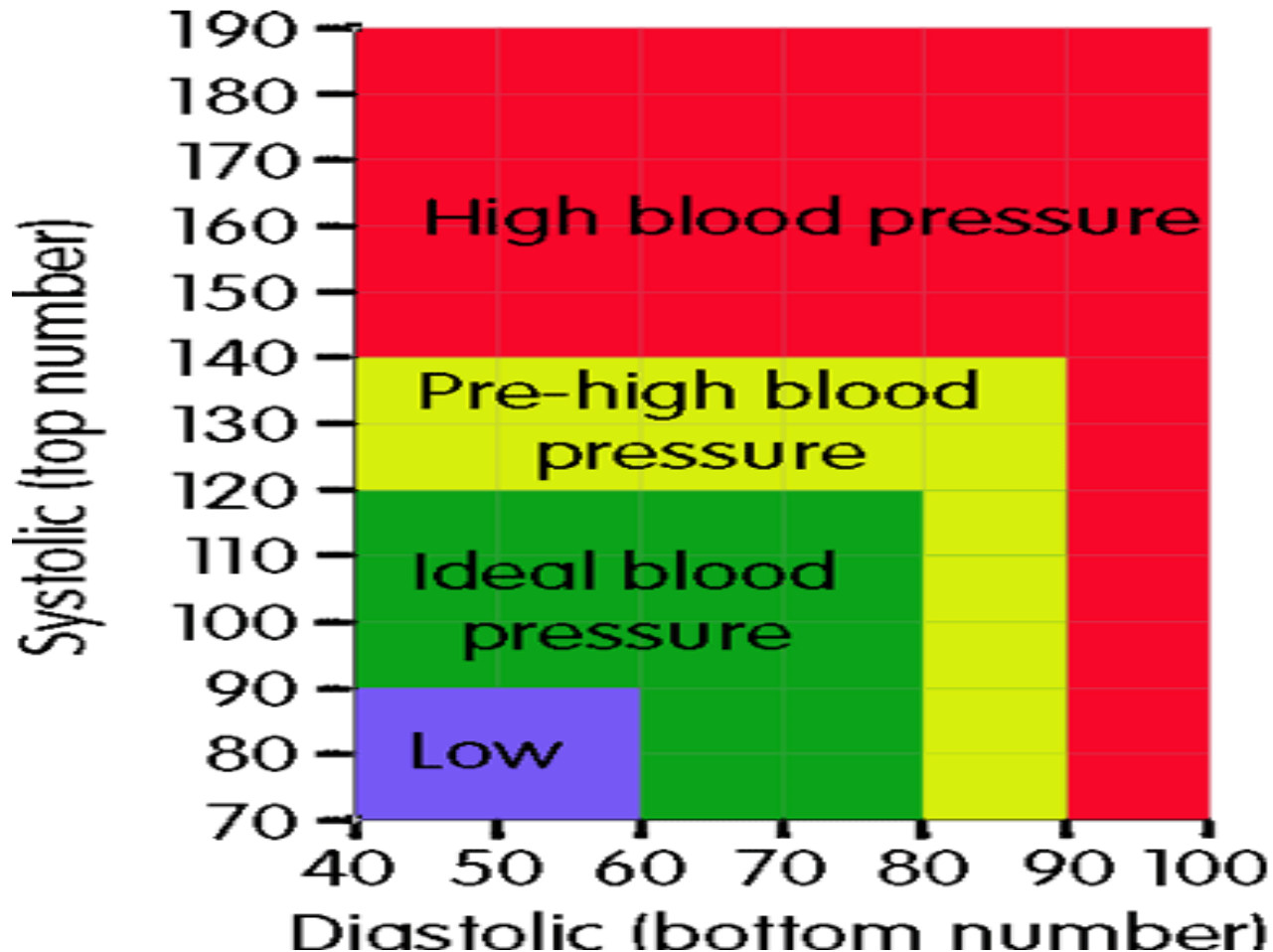
Blood Pressure Testing

- > Do not measure if you have eaten, drunk caffeine or alcohol, smoked or exercised during previous 30 mins
- > Check BP at the same time of day
- > Always use the same arm
- > Do not move or talk when taking measurement
- > Take two or three readings, each about two minutes apart, and then work out the average.



Blood Pressure Testing Chart

Blood pressure chart for adults



Blood Pressure Readings – Normal

- > 120 over 80 (120/80) is the ideal blood pressure for people wishing to have good health.
- > At this level, we have a much lower risk of heart disease or stroke.
- > If your blood pressure is above 120/80, you will need to lower it.



Blood Pressure Readings – High BP

Your may have *high* BP if your:

- > top number is 140 or more
(regardless of bottom number)
- > bottom number is 90 or more
(regardless of top number)

over a number of weeks.



A single high reading does not necessarily mean you have high BP. Many things can affect your blood pressure through the day, so you need to take a number of readings.

Blood Pressure Readings – low BP

You may have *low* BP if your:

- > top number is 90 or less
(regardless of bottom number)
- > bottom number is 60 or less
(regardless of top number)



Causes of High Blood Pressure

Normally no signs or symptoms

Lifestyle issues:

- > Overweight
- > Eat too much salt
- > Don't eat enough fruit & vegetables
- > Don't take enough exercise
- > Drink too much alcohol



You can do something about these!

Causes of High Blood Pressure

The following increase your risk of developing high BP

- > Your ethnic origin – if you are Asian or Afro-Caribbean
- > Family history - if other members of your family have, or have had, high BP.
- > Your age – the risk increases as you get older



Unfortunately you can't do anything about these!

Effects of High Blood Pressure

If you have high BP your heart has to work harder to pump the blood around the body making it less efficient. High BP can affect your body in a number of ways:

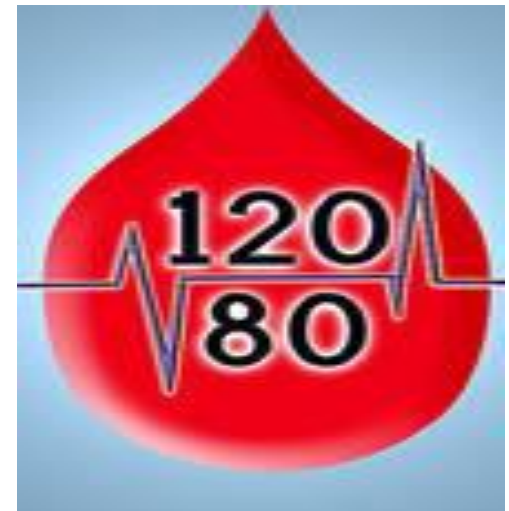


- > **Your heart:** high BP can cause you to have a heart attack or lead to heart failure.
- > **Your brain:** high BP is a leading cause of strokes. It has also been closely linked to some forms of dementia.

Effects of High Blood Pressure

- > **Your kidneys:** high BP can cause kidney disease.
- > **Your limbs:** high BP can cause peripheral arterial disease, which can affect your legs.

If you have other health conditions, such as *diabetes* or *high cholesterol*, this increases your risk of health problems even more. It is then even more important to keep your BP at normal levels



Effects of High Blood Pressure

If you have high readings:

- Always consult your GP
- Consider lifestyle changes



Low Blood Pressure

- > Generally no cause for concern & no treatment required
- > In fact good news – the lower your BP, the lower the risk of heart attack or stroke
- > Can lead to dizziness or feeling faint
- > However if BP suddenly lower than normal, consult your GP.

