

Measure your blood pressure at home



Measuring at home can help you to understand what your blood pressure is like day to day. You can also see the effect that a

healthy lifestyle and medicines are having on your blood pressure levels.

It is important that the monitor you use has been clinically validated to be sure it will give you accurate results. Contact us or visit our website for more details.

Your details

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to receive regular email updates with news and information about high blood pressure, tick the box below and give us your email address.

☐ I wish to receive email updates about high blood pressure and to be contacted by email:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

What the blood pressure numbers mean

Your reading	What this means	What to do
120/80 or lower	Your blood pressure level is ideal	Follow the advice in this leaflet to keep it this way
Between 121/81 – 139/89	Your blood pressure is higher than it should be	Follow the advice in this leaflet to lower it
140/90 or higher	You may have high blood pressure	See your GP or practice nurse for further advice

What can I do to control my blood pressure?

High blood pressure is not something you feel or notice, so the only way to know what your blood pressure is, is to have it measured. When you have your blood pressure measured, check your numbers against the chart above.

If you do not have high blood pressure you can keep it this way by following the advice in this leaflet.

If you have high blood pressure, you may need to take medicines to lower it. But it is also vital to follow the advice in this leaflet to help your medicines to work better.

About the Blood Pressure Association

The Blood Pressure Association is the UK charity working to lower the nation’s blood pressure to prevent disability and death from stroke, heart attack and heart disease.

If you have high blood pressure, our information and support services can help you to control it. These include:

- A telephone information line (0845 241 0989, 11am -3pm Mon-Fri)
- A range of useful booklets and information sheets to help you understand more about your blood pressure.
- A website packed with information and an email enquiry service if you have any questions
- Online discussion forums to share your experiences and learn from other people with high blood pressure.

The Blood Pressure Association is a registered charity and we rely on donations to help us carry out our work. Why not become a full member to help support us? Our members receive a quarterly magazine and access to a range of products and services. Membership costs £20 a year (£10 a year discounted rate).

For more information, call us on 020 8772 4994, or visit our website [www.bpassoc.org.uk](http://www.bpassoc.org.uk)

High blood pressure:

a practical guide from the Blood Pressure Association



Blood Pressure Association

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## 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 your blood vessels. The strength of this pushing is your blood pressure.

## What do my numbers mean?

When your blood pressure is measured it will be written as two numbers, for example 120/80. You would read this as '120 over 80'.

1

The first number is your **systolic** blood pressure. It is the highest level your blood pressure reaches when your heart beats.

2

The second number is your **diastolic** blood pressure. It is the lowest level your blood pressure reaches when your heart relaxes between beats.

Both of these numbers are very important. The higher they are, the higher your risk of health problems in the future. So it is very important to know what your blood pressure is, and to lower it if you need to.



"I was diagnosed with high blood pressure at 45 and the Blood Pressure Association has been there for me from the start. My father died of a heart attack aged 55 and I want to do all I can to avoid the same fate, for me and for my children."

## What is high blood pressure?

If your blood pressure is consistently 140/90 or higher over a number of weeks, then you probably have high blood pressure. Your blood pressure may also be high if just one of the numbers is higher than it should be.

Over time, high blood pressure damages your body's organs, raising your risk of a heart attack or stroke. High blood pressure also causes heart and kidney disease, and is closely connected to some types of dementia.

## Who gets high blood pressure?

There is usually no single cause for high blood pressure but your risk is greater if you lead an unhealthy lifestyle.

Your risk of high blood pressure increases as you get older, but this does not mean it is a normal part of ageing. Whatever age you are, there is much you can do to keep your blood pressure down.

You have a greater risk if you have a family history of high blood pressure, heart disease or stroke. You also have a higher risk if you are of African Caribbean descent.

**If you have high blood pressure, don't ignore it. Lowering your blood pressure reduces your risk of a heart attack or stroke**

## How to lower your blood pressure



### Eat less salt

Eating too much salt raises your blood pressure. There is "hidden" salt in lots of the foods we eat, like bread, breakfast cereals, and ready meals. Always check food labels and go for products with less than 0.25g of salt per 100g.



### Eat more fruit and vegetables

Five or more portions of fruit and vegetables every day will help to lower your blood pressure. A portion is 80g, roughly the size of your fist. Fresh, dried, frozen and tinned are all fine, but watch out for added salt, sugar or fats.



### Drink less alcohol

Drinking too much alcohol will raise your blood pressure over time. The recommended limits are 3 to 4 units of alcohol a day for men, and 2 to 3 units a day for women.

### Get more active

30 minutes of moderate exercise 5 days a week will lower your blood pressure. Anything that leaves you warm and slightly out of breath is ideal. If you can't find 30 minutes in your day, increasing your activity by even a small amount can help.



## Keep to a healthy weight

Being overweight will raise your blood pressure. A healthy diet and regular exercise will help you keep to a healthy weight, and will

keep your heart and blood vessels in good condition.



## Take medicines if you need them

Most people with high blood pressure will need to take one or more medicines to control it. Adjusting to taking medicines every day can be difficult, but they will really help to lower your risk of heart disease and stroke.

## For more information

For more information about high blood pressure and how to control it, fill out this form and return it to us. We have a range of useful information about blood pressure, so please tell us if you would like to know more about:

- About high blood pressure ☐
- Healthy eating and blood pressure ☐
- Healthy lifestyle and blood pressure ☐
- Blood pressure medicines ☐
- Measuring blood pressure at home ☐
- Other (please tell us) ☐

Return this form to: Blood Pressure Association, FREEPOST LON 17815, 60 Cranmer Terrace, London SW17 0QS.