American Heart Association®

Live Fierce™
Reduce Your Risk

Life's Essential **8**™

HOW TO MANAGE BLOOD PRESSURE

✓ UNDERSTAND READINGS

Make smart choices and swaps to build an overall healthy eating style. Watch calories and eat smaller portions.

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

117 / 76

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.

Read as "117 over 76" millimeters of mercury.

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC MM HG (UPPER #)		DIASTOLIC MM HG (LOWER #)
Normal	Lower than 120	*and*	Lower than 80
Elevated Blood Pressure	120 –129	*and*	80
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1	130 –139	*or*	80 –89
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2	140 or higher	*or*	90 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis (Consult your doctor immediately)	Higher than 180	*and/ or*	Higher than 120

✓ TRACK LEVELS

A diagnosis of high blood pressure must be confirmed with a health care professional. Any unusually low blood pressure readings should also be evaluated.

Health care professionals can take blood pressure readings and provide recommendations.

Learn more at
heart.org/lifes8

Locally sponsored by

vsp

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

EAT SMART

Eat a healthy diet of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, legumes, nuts, plant-based proteins, lean animal proteins like fish and seafood.

Limit sugary foods and drinks, red or processed meats, salty foods, refined carbohydrates and highly processed foods.

MOVE MORE

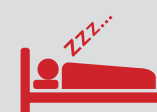Physical activity helps control blood pressure, weight and stress levels.

MANAGE WEIGHT

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

NO NICOTINE

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

SLEEP WELL

Short sleep (less than 7 hours) and poor-quality sleep are associated with high blood pressure.