

# Understanding Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is a growing problem that is easily overlooked. An estimated one-third of Americans have high blood pressure. It is important to be aware of the healthy ranges, complications, how to measure, and how to maintain blood pressure. Awareness is the first step towards decreasing high blood pressure.

## Healthy Ranges

Blood pressure is a measure of the force of blood on the heart. Systolic numbers measure when the heart is actively pumping and diastolic numbers refer to when the heart is at rest.

### Systolic Pressure

Under 120	Normal
120-139	Pre-Hypertensive
140-159	Hypertensive
Above 160	Stage 2 Hypertensive

### Diastolic Pressure

Under 80	Normal
80-89	Pre-Hypertensive
90-99	Hypertensive
Above 100	Stage 2 Hypertensive

## Complications

Knowing the complications of high blood pressure will help you identify why it is so important to measure blood pressure regularly.

- Coronary artery disease
- Heart failure
- Stroke
- Peripheral vascular disease
- Kidney impairment
- Clogged arteries
- Overworking heart

## Maintaining Healthy Blood Pressure

Whether you are trying to maintain healthy blood pressure or are working to get it healthy, following these suggestions will certainly help keep blood pressure low.

- Keep an active lifestyle
- Lower salt intake
- No smoking or alcohol
- 150 minutes of moderate activity per week
- Medication if needed

## DASH Diet

The DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) is a commonly prescribed method used to reduce hypertension.

- Similar to Mediterranean diet
- High plant-based food intake
- Whole grains
- Lean meats
- Abundance of leafy greens
- Little processed and packaged foods = lower salt intake