

# Blood Pressure

Most people with high blood pressure have no symptoms at all. There are no specific warning signs. The only way to find out if you have high blood pressure is through regular monitoring.

## What is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force exerted on the walls of your blood vessels (artery) as blood flows through them.

Your heart is like a pump. When it contracts, or beats, it sends a surge of blood through the blood vessels and pressure increases. This is called systolic pressure .

When your heart relaxes between beats, your blood pressure decreases. This is called your diastolic pressure.

Normal blood pressure falls within a range - it's not one set of numbers. But if you're an adult, it should be less than 140/90 mmHg. If you have diabetes, renal insufficiency or heart failure, your doctor will want it to be no higher than 130/85 mmHg. If your blood pressure goes above this threshold and stays there, you have high blood pressure.

## About Blood Pressure

The 7th report of the Joint National Committee on Prevention Detection, Evaluation and Treatment of High Blood Pressure (JNC 7) from the National Institutes of Health classification is only a general guideline because blood pressure depends on our age, morbidity, and treatment strategy by a physician. CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN TO DETERMINE YOUR NORMAL BLOOD PRESSURE.

	Systolic (mmHG)	Diastolic (mmHG)
Normal	<120	<80
PreHypertension	120-139	80-89
Stage 1 Hypertension	140-159	90-99
Stage 2 Hypertension	≥160	≥100

## What does high blood pressure do to your body?

High blood pressure adds to the workload of the heart and arteries. The heart must pump with more force, and the arteries must carry blood that is moving under greater pressure. If high blood pressure continues for a long time, the heart and the arteries may not function as well as they should and other body organs may also be affected. There is increased risk of stroke, heart failure, kidney failure and heart attack.

## Blood Pressure Measurement

When a doctor takes your blood pressure, he or she measures both your systolic and diastolic pressures and records them as numbers. For example, if your blood pressure reading is 126/76, your systolic is 126 and your diastolic is 76. The numbers are calculated in millimeters of mercury and recorded as 126/76 mmHg.

These two numbers provide important information about your health. The more difficult it is for your blood to flow through your blood vessels, the higher both numbers will be. When blood pressure is consistently above normal it is called hypertension (high blood pressure).

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## Blood Pressure Q & A

**Q** Why is the doctor's reading different from the reading taken at home?

**A** Blood pressure can vary due to exercise or the environment (temperature, nervous condition). Particularly when measured at the doctor's office, it is possible for blood pressure to increase over readings taken at home due to anxiety and tension. It is important to know your regular, relaxed blood pressure by measuring at home.

**Q** Why is the blood pressure reading out always different?

**A** Your blood pressure changes constantly. Blood pressure fluctuates from day to day and minute to minute according to your body's needs. For example, when you are exercising or angry your blood pressure increases, but when you are relaxing or sleeping, your blood pressure decreases. These fluctuations are completely normal.

**Q** How important is it to monitor blood pressure at home?

**A** One or two readings will not provide a true indication of your normal blood pressure. It is very important to take regular, daily measurements and to keep accurate records. In partnership with your doctor, an accurate record of your blood pressure over a period of time can be a valuable aid in diagnosing and preventing potential health problems.

## Morning Hypertension

Do you and your doctor know your morning blood pressure numbers? If you don't, you may be at risk of having a morning blood pressure surge - also known as morning hypertension - which puts you at increased risk of having a stroke.

- ◆ 50% of patients with high blood pressure also have morning hypertension
- ◆ Half of all strokes occur in the morning

This means that even if you think you manage your blood pressure, or take medication, you can still have morning hypertension and be at increased risk of stroke. Omron is the first to offer home blood pressure monitors that are designed to detect morning hypertension by calculating your average weekly morning blood pressure.

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New Line Medical, Inc.  
(800) 452-8909  
[www.NewLineMedical.com](http://www.NewLineMedical.com)