



Fact Sheet

Hypertension

What is it?

When your heart beats it pumps blood through your arteries and causes pressure. Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a common condition in which the force of the blood against your artery walls is too high and may eventually cause health problems. Knowing your blood pressure numbers and understanding them is important to manage your health. Uncontrolled high blood pressure increases your risk of serious health problems, including heart attack and stroke.

What are the symptoms?

Most people have no signs or symptoms. Although a few people with early-stage high blood pressure may have dull headaches, dizzy spells, or a few more nosebleeds than normal.

How is it diagnosed?

Blood pressure is measured with an inflatable arm cuff and a pressure-measuring gauge. A blood pressure reading has two numbers. **The first**, or upper, number measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats (systolic pressure). **The second**, or lower, number measures the pressure in your arteries between beats (diastolic pressure). Diagnosis of hypertension depends on how high the numbers are; the higher the pressure or numbers the more severe the hypertension.

Category	Blood Pressure
Normal	120/80 or below
Pre-Hypertension	120-139/80-90
Stage 1 Hypertension	140-159/90-99
Stage 2 Hypertension	160/100 or above

Risk Factors

- Family history
- Physical inactivity
- Poor nutrition
- Excess sodium intake
- Inadequate intake of vitamin D
- Tobacco use
- Chronic stress

Complications

- Heart attack, Heart failure, or stroke
- Weakened or bulged blood vessels, resulting in a potentially life-threatening aneurysm
- Weakened and narrowed blood vessels in your kidneys
- Thickened, narrowed, or torn blood vessels in the eyes
- Metabolic syndrome
- Trouble with memory or understanding
- Nausea or other physical symptoms of distress

Treatment

- Take prescribed medications properly
- Eat a healthy diet and reduce sodium intake
- Exercise and lose weight if needed
- Quit smoking and reduce alcohol consumption
- Find healthy stress management strategies
- Monitor your blood pressure