

Blood Pressure

All of the organs in the body need oxygen in order to function, and oxygen is carried to the organs by blood moving through the circulatory system. Blood pressure is the amount of force your blood puts on your arteries when it moves through the body. Blood pressure does not stay the same all of the time. It lowers when you sleep and rises when you exercise or are nervous or excited. When blood pressure is above the normal range most of the time, there is risk of health problems such as heart disease, stroke, and kidney failure. Because **high blood pressure** (also called hypertension) usually has no symptoms, it is referred to as "The Silent Killer."

Your Blood Pressure is: _____ / _____ Checked on: _____
(Systolic) (Diastolic)

CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC (mm Hg)		DIASTOLIC (mm Hg)
Normal *	less than 120	and	less than 80
Pre-Hypertension	120-139	or	80-89
Hypertension Stage 1	140-159	or	90-99
Hypertension Stage 2	160 or higher	or	100 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis	180 +	or	110 +

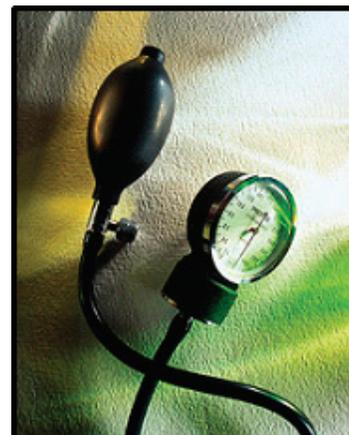
* Unusually low reading should be evaluated for clinical significance.

What do the numbers mean?

- **Systolic Pressure** (larger number) measures pressure in your arteries when the heart pumps blood throughout the body.
- **Diastolic Pressure** (smaller number) measures pressure in your arteries when your heart is resting between beats.

How can High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) damage your body?

- Your heart and arteries have a greater load of work.
- Your heart may get enlarged, and if too much, it may not be able to meet your body's demands.
- High blood pressure may speed up the hardening of your arteries and cause loss of elasticity.
- It increases your risk of stroke



(Cont. on Back)



What can cause High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)?

- Blood pressure tends to rise with age
- Certain medical conditions (ex. Kidney disease, Thyroid disease, Sleep apnea)
- Certain medications
- Pregnancy may induce high blood pressure in women.

Controllable Risk Factors:

- Exercise regularly – physical inactivity may lead to obesity, which in turn increases the chance of high blood pressure.
- Watch your weight – individuals who are overweight are more likely to develop high blood pressure.
- Drink alcohol in moderation – excess intake of alcohol may increase blood pressure.
- Reduce stress – even though individuals handle stress differently, high stress levels increase blood pressure.
- Reduce sodium intake – salt intake increases blood pressure in some individuals.
- Do not smoke – smoking increases blood pressure.

Non-Controllable Risk Factors:

- Race/Ethnicity: African Americans develop hypertension more often than whites.
- Gender: Men generally develop high blood pressure earlier than women.
- Heredity: Hypertension tends to run in families.
- Age: Chances of developing hypertension increase with age.

High blood pressure usually has no symptoms, and this is why it is so dangerous. It is important to follow your health care practitioner's recommendations for how often to get your blood pressure checked.

FREE Blood Pressure Checks at:

Student Health Services, Bldg. 46. Call 909-869-4000 to schedule an appt. with a nurse.

SHCS Wellness Center, Bldg. 46 (West Entrance) Walk in when open.

Sources:

www.heart.org

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/hbp/>