

# HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against blood vessel walls. High blood pressure (HBP) or hypertension means that the pressure in your arteries is higher than it should be, which increases the risk of a heart attack or stroke.<sup>1</sup>

Normal blood pressure is less than 120/80 mm hg. The systolic blood pressure (upper) number is the pressure when the heart beats and the diastolic blood pressure (lower) number is the pressure when the heart rests between beats.<sup>1</sup>

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
<b>NORMAL</b>	<b>LESS THAN 120</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>LESS THAN 80</b>
<b>ELEVATED</b>	<b>120-129</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>LESS THAN 80</b>
<b>HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1</b>	<b>130-139</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>80-89</b>
<b>HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2</b>	<b>140 OR HIGHER</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>90 OR HIGHER</b>
<b>HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)</b>	<b>HIGHER THAN 180</b>	<b>and/or</b>	<b>HIGHER THAN 120</b>

Source: [American Heart Association](#)

## UNHEALTHY HABITS CAN CAUSE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

You are likely to develop HBP if you do not control the following:

- Unhealthy eating patterns
- Physical inactivity
- Alcohol consumption
- Cigarette smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke

Sources:

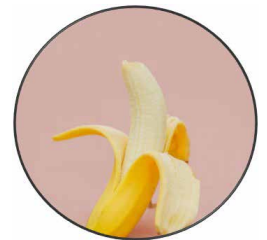
1. [American Heart Association, What is High Blood Pressure?](#)
2. [American Heart Association, How Potassium Can Help Control High Blood Pressure](#)
3. [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Types of Fat](#)
4. [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Your Guide to Lowering Blood Pressure](#)

## PREVENT OR CONTROL HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE BY FOLLOWING A HEALTHY EATING PATTERN

Like the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) pattern, which limits red meat, salt and sweets, the plant-based eating pattern reduces blood pressure by eating a high consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and nuts. Other tips include:

### Increase potassium intake:

Potassium can help control blood pressure by processing sodium out of the body and help relax blood vessel walls. Foods high in potassium include bananas, spinach and oranges.<sup>2</sup>



### Decrease saturated and trans fat intake:

Limit foods that are high in saturated and trans fat, such as fatty meats and butter. Opt for unsaturated fats when cooking and snacking, such as olive oil and almonds. Unsaturated fats help stabilize heart rhythms.<sup>3</sup>



### Decrease sodium intake:

Choose low-sodium versions of salad dressings, broths and canned vegetables, which you can identify by reading the nutrition label. Also opt for flavorful alternatives to season your meals such as lemon, paprika and allspice, instead of salt.<sup>4</sup>

