

High Blood Pressure Guidelines

Blood pressure (BP) is considered high when systolic BP is greater than 140 and diastolic BP greater than 90. Approximately one in four adults will have high blood pressure, or hypertension. Hypertension affects 50 million individuals in the United States.

The higher the BP, the greater is the chance of heart attack, heart failure, stroke, and kidney disease. For people 40–70 years of age, each increment of 20 in systolic BP or 10 in diastolic BP doubles the risk of cardiovascular risk across the entire BP range from 115/75 to 185/115.

In clinical trials, treatment of high blood pressure has been associated with reductions in stroke incidence averaging 35–40 percent; heart attack, 20–25 percent; and heart failure, more than 50 percent.

Classification of Blood Pressure

The following classification is based on the average of two or more properly measured seated BP readings on each of two or more office visits.

Patients with pre-hypertension are at increased risk for progression to hypertension; those in the 130–139/80–89 mmHg BP range are at twice the risk to develop hypertension as those with lower values.

Category	Systolic Blood pressure	Diastolic Blood Pressure
Normal	<120	<80
Pre-hypertension	120-139	80-89
Hypertension, Stage I	140-159	90-99
Hypertension, Stage II	>160	>100

If you are diagnosed with high blood pressure, your physician can:

- Assess your risk factors and comorbidities.
- Reveal other possible causes of high blood pressure.
- Assess presence of target organ damage.
- Conduct history and physical examination.
- Obtain laboratory tests: urinalysis, blood glucose, hematocrit and cholesterol, serum potassium, creatinine, and calcium.
- Optional: urinary albumin/creatinine ratio.
- Obtain electrocardiogram.

Your physician can recommend dietary and lifestyle changes to control high blood pressure. Or depending on individual factors, recommend blood pressure medication.

Generally, physicians will treat high blood pressure with a goal of achieving a level less than 140/90. If you have other risk factors such as diabetes, kidney disease, or heart disease, the goal should be < 130/80.