

BLOOD PRESSURE



Learn More

For additional information on **blood pressure** visit Hypertension Canada: www.hypertension.ca

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Talk to a Doctor

Make sure to have your blood pressure measured at least once every two years, or more often if your doctor recommends it.

Many pharmacies have blood pressure machines you can use on your own at no charge – try it out!

It's All About Lifestyle

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is essential to keeping your blood pressure under control.

- **Eat a balanced diet** from all four food groups. Eat more fruits and vegetables and less sugar and salt.
- **Maintain a healthy body weight.** If you are overweight, losing even a modest amount of weight can help reduce your blood pressure.
- **Limit your alcohol** intake to 1 to 2 drinks per day.
- **Stress management.** Learn how to deal with stress in a healthy way can help reduce your blood pressure.

Get Treatment

The doctor needs to assess why you have high BP, and may need to treat an underlying disorders. Fortunately, there are a number of medications are available to control blood pressure. Your doctor may also recommend a home blood pressure monitoring system.

Canadian Men's Health Foundation

www.menshealthfoundation.ca
info@menshealthfoundation.ca



BLOOD PRESSURE: WHAT IS IT?

Know the Facts

Blood pressure is a measure of how much force the heart is using to pump blood around the body. Your blood pressure can vary throughout the day, and change from day to day. It can also change according to your activity, posture and emotions. These changes are normal if your blood pressure is within the healthy range.

There are two types of blood pressure:

- **Systolic blood pressure** (the top number) measures the force of the blood against your artery walls when it's at its greatest.
- **Diastolic blood pressure** (the bottom number) measures the pressure of the blood when the heart relaxes and the force of the blood is at its lowest.

Example: $\frac{120 \text{ (normal systolic BP, mmHg)}}{70 \text{ (normal diastolic BP, mmHg)}}$

Having an overly high blood pressure can be harmful. High blood pressure can cause strokes, heart attacks, and heart and kidney failure. It can also be related to dementia and sexual problems. These issues can be prevented if high blood pressure is controlled.

Hypertension

A blood pressure that goes up and stays up above 140 mm Hg (systolic) over 90 mm Hg (diastolic) is considered high blood pressure, also called **hypertension**.

WHO IS AT RISK?

Know the Risk Factors

Many of the factors that could put you at risk for high blood pressure are related to lifestyle.

These include:

- An unhealthy diet
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Lack of exercise
- Obesity
- Stress
- Sleep apnea
- Kidney disease
- Smoking

Some of the other risk factors aren't possible to control. If one or more of these describes you, it's even more important to be aware of the risks of high blood pressure and take steps to prevent it.

- Being over 65
- A family history of high blood pressure
- Being of African, South Asian or Aboriginal descent

WHAT SHOULD YOU WATCH FOR?

Watch for These Things

Most people with high blood pressure don't have any symptoms. However, some people with high BP who do may experience signs like headaches, vision problems, dizziness, or shortness of breath.

When a doctor checks your blood pressure and the reading is high, it doesn't necessarily mean that you have high blood pressure. It's only possible to be sure you have high blood pressure after the blood pressure is measured several times in a relaxed setting by a health professional.

Be sure to visit your local drug store to keep an eye on your blood pressure. Use their in-store blood pressure machines to measure your blood pressure and speak with your pharmacist about your results.

