

What is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of the blood pushing against the walls of the arteries. It is the greatest when the heart contracts and pumps the blood (**Systolic Pressure**). When the heart is at rest, in between beats, the pressure falls (**Diastolic Pressure**).

Blood pressure is always given in two numbers:

120 Systolic
80 Diastolic

Blood Pressure changes continuously during the day, lower at rest and highest during activity, excitement or nervousness. BUT, for most of your waking hours it should be about the same: ideally around 120/80.

	Systolic Number (top)	Diastolic Number (bottom)
Normal	Less than 120	Less than 80
Pre-Hypertensive	120-139	80-90
High Blood Pressure	140 or higher	90 or higher

My blood pressure today is: _____

High blood pressure causes the heart to work harder and can lead to stroke, heart failure, heart attack and kidney failure.

The cause of high blood pressure (hypertension) is often unknown.

If you have hypertension or pre-hypertension:

- Lose weight if you are overweight
- Get regular physical activity
- Avoid salty foods
- Consume no more than 2 alcoholic drinks per day
- Take your blood pressure medication as prescribed by your healthcare provider.

All high blood pressure requires close medical management by your primary care healthcare provider or cardiologist.

Questions about your blood pressure?

Talk with a VNA Community Healthcare & Hospice nurse at one of our free screenings or call our Wellness Center at 203.4284 or email KEagle@vna-commh.org



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