

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Blood pressure readings are usually given as 2 numbers. For example, 140 over 90 (written as 140/90).

- The top number is your systolic pressure, the pressure created when your heart beats.
- The bottom number is your diastolic pressure, the pressure inside blood vessels when the heart is at rest. **Your blood pressure is considered high if your diastolic pressure is consistently over 90.**

CAUSES

Many factors can affect blood pressure, including how much water and salt you have in your body, the condition of your kidneys, nervous system, or blood vessels, and the levels of different body hormones. High blood pressure can affect all types of people. You have a higher risk of high blood pressure if you have a family history of the disease. Most of the time, no cause is identified, this is called **essential hypertension**. High blood pressure that results from a specific condition, habit, or medication is called **secondary hypertension**.

Too much salt in your diet can lead to high blood pressure. Secondary hypertension may also be due to:

- Anxiety and stress
- Appetite suppressants
- Arteriosclerosis
- Birth control pills
- Diabetes
- Kidney disease
- Migraine medicines
- Obesity
- Pregnancy (called gestational hypertension)

SYMPTOMS

- Dizziness
- Chest pain
- Ear noise or buzzing
- Irregular heartbeat
- Nosebleed
- Tiredness
- Vision changes

If you have a severe headache or any of the symptoms above, see your doctor right away.

TREATMENT

The goal of treatment is to reduce blood pressure so that you have a lower risk of complications. There are many different medicines that can be used to treat high blood pressure. Your doctor may also tell you to exercise, lose weight, and follow a healthier diet.



PREVENTION

Lifestyle changes may help control your blood pressure:

- Lose weight if you are overweight. In some cases, weight loss may be the only treatment needed.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat a healthy diet. Eat less fat and sodium. Eat more fruits, vegetables, and fiber.
- Avoid smoking.