

# Blood Pressure - the silent killer

**So you have had a check up and your doctor tells you that you have high blood pressure. What does that mean?**

**Blood gets pumped around the body when our hearts fill and contract, putting pressure on the arteries.**

**This pressure is highest when leaving the heart and lowest when it returns.**

**Measuring and describing these (high/low numbers) gives your blood pressure.**



Ideally you are 120/80 ('120 over 80') or lower.

## High Blood Pressure - Hypertension

Hypertension occurs when there is too much pressure in your blood vessels. This can damage your blood vessels and cause health problems. Think too much air in your tyres.

Anyone can develop high blood pressure, but it becomes more common as you get older. High blood pressure can lead to strokes, heart attacks, heart and kidney failure. It's a silent killer because we only know it when we measure it.

Anything over 140/90 and you need to start lowering it.

### What to do?

- 1. Get checked regularly. High blood pressure has no warning signs or symptoms. It's silent. Know your numbers and know your risk.**

- 2. Your doctor may prescribe medications. Take them.**
- 3. Do the sensible stuff: moderate physical activity, eat lots of fruits and vegetables, maintain a healthy weight, cut down on salt and booze, avoid processed meat, and don't smoke.**
- 4. Remember - start small and big changes can come. But start.**

Blood pressure tests are quick and easy. You can do them at doctors, pharmacies, other health providers or even at home.

The single most important thing that a person with high blood pressure can do is to have an ongoing relationship with a primary care provider. Go to your doctor, establish what your blood pressure is, and then when that changes, your doctor will recommend steps that will keep you from the clutches of the world's biggest 'silent killer'.

**Big takeaway:**  
**Have your blood pressure checked at least once every year by a health care provider, or more often if your blood pressure is high.**

Blood Pressure	Systolic mm HG (TOP NUMBER)		Systolic mm HG (TOP NUMBER)
Normal	<120	AND	<80
Elevated	120 - 129	AND	<80
High Blood Pressure (STAGE 1 HYPERTENSION)	130 - 139	OR	80 - 89
High Blood Pressure (STAGE 2 HYPERTENSION)	>140	OR	>90
Hypertensive Crisis (SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION)	>180	AND/OR	>120