



# HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE HEALTH GUIDE

## What is High Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood against your arteries as the blood circulates throughout your body. High blood pressure, also called hypertension, occurs when the pressure level stays high for a long period of time without falling to a normal level. This can lead to serious health conditions such as heart disease and stroke. Managing your blood pressure is key to a healthy heart.

	Systolic (top#)		Diastolic (bottom#)
Normal	<120	and	<80
Pre-hypertension	121-139	or	81-99
Stage 1 Hypertension	140-159	or	90-99
Stage 2 Hypertension	≥160	or	≥ 100

## Quick Tips to Remember Before You Check Your Blood Pressure

- No caffeine (coffee, tea, soda) or cigarettes 30 minutes before measuring blood pressure.
- No exercise right before measuring blood pressure.
- Go to the bathroom before checking blood pressure. A full bladder can change the reading.
- Check your blood pressure in a quiet place. Remain quiet and do not talk.
- Relax in a chair that supports your back and is next to a table for 5 to 10 minutes. Your arm should rest at heart level.
- Sit up straight and do not cross your legs.
- You should check your blood pressure on a bare arm.
- Take your blood pressure about the same time each day.
- Do at least two readings more than two minutes apart. If you can, average the readings for a better idea of your blood pressure level.
- Check your blood pressure several times a day to see if it changes.
- Write your blood pressures down in a diary each time you take them or store your readings on your blood pressure monitor system.
- Bring your blood pressure readings when you visit the doctor.

## Home Blood Pressure Monitoring

Blood pressure cuffs can be purchased at pharmacies and other retailers. No prescription is needed and costs range from \$20-\$120. When a specific type of machine is required and a physician writes a prescription, insurance may cover the cost. Ask your provider if home monitoring is right for you.

## Local Screening

Many faith-based organizations also provide blood pressure screening. Please check with your local congregations to see if they offer screenings.

## Did You Know?

Your local hospitals offer free or low-cost programs and classes to help keep your heart healthy. These programs will support you and your family and help you avoid heart disease. Contact a hospital near you to learn more. Topics include:

- ♥ High Blood Pressure
- ♥ Diabetes
- ♥ Heart Disease

