

Hypertension - New Guidelines

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) has issued changes in what is considered normal or a desired Blood Pressure (BP) reading. Approximately 50 million Americans have hypertension (high blood pressure) and nearly one-third of Americans with high blood pressure don't know they have the disease.

To determine which category you are in, take 2 or more blood pressures and average the results.

Category	Systolic mm/Hg Upper BP Number		Diastolic mm/Hg Bottom BP Number
Normal	less than 120	and	less than 80
Prehypertension	120-139	or	80-89
Stage 1	140-159	or	90-99
Stage 2	greater than 160	or	greater than 100

Seventh report of the joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation and Treatment of High Blood Pressure, Bethesda, MD: National Institutes of Health

Lifestyle changes that can help to reduce your risk of high blood pressure and treat if it you are diagnosed:

- Don't smoke
- Lose weight if you are overweight
- Eat right. Avoid salt and read the labels on the foods you buy to make sure they are low in sodium. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables. They may help to lower your blood pressure by providing you with important minerals, such as calcium and magnesium.
- Be physically active, but check with your doctor first if you have any health problems.
- Reduce stress in your life. Slow, deep breaths can help or consider enrolling in a yoga class.
- If your doctor has prescribed medications, make sure to take them regularly.