



YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

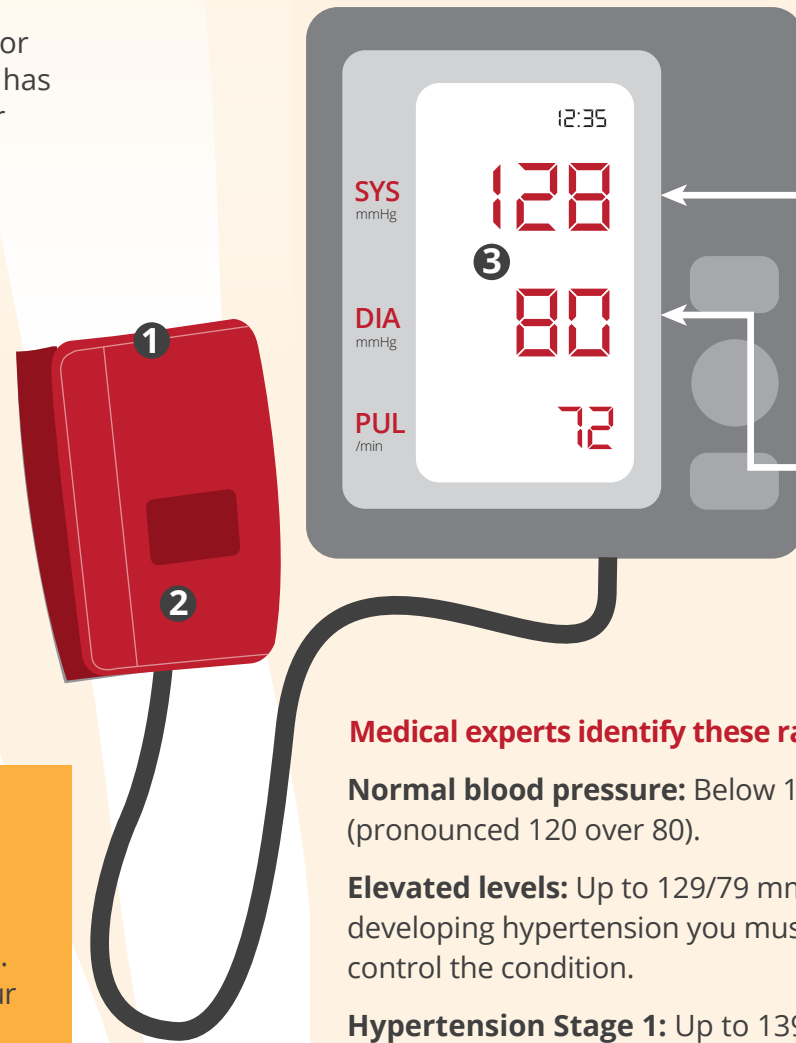
UNDERSTANDING HYPERTENSION

When your heart pumps blood through the body, the force it puts on the walls of your arteries is known as blood pressure. Everyone's blood pressure naturally rises and falls throughout the day, but when it is consistently above normal you may have high blood pressure, **also known as hypertension**. Early detection of this potentially deadly condition is crucial, including for women, who are as likely as men to develop hypertension. Young young people are not immune. Fortunately, many people can keep their blood pressure in a healthy range by making smart lifestyle choices.

HOW BLOOD PRESSURE IS MEASURED

Blood pressure can be measured by a doctor or other health professional, at a pharmacy that has a digital measurement machine, or using your own blood pressure monitor at home.

- 1 Blood pressure is measured** in a quick and painless process with a special cuff wrapped around your upper arm.
- 2 The cuff is inflated**, which gently tightens it, then air is slowly let out of the cuff.
- 3 The diastolic and systolic numbers** are detected automatically by the device, or sometimes by listening with a stethoscope.



KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

High blood pressure is often referred to as a "silent killer" because you can have no symptoms, but the changes happening inside your body can become deadly.

Blood pressure is assessed as two separate numbers.

The first, called **systolic**, counts the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats.

The second, called **diastolic**, tracks the pressure between beats when your heart is resting.

Both numbers together make up your blood pressure.

Medical experts identify these ranges of blood pressure from safe to scary:

Normal blood pressure: Below 120/80 mm Hg (pronounced 120 over 80).

Elevated levels: Up to 129/79 mm Hg. To keep from developing hypertension you must take lifestyle steps to control the condition.

Hypertension Stage 1: Up to 139/89 mm Hg. Lifestyle changes may be enough to bring it down or you may need medication.

Note: This information is not intended to be used for diagnosing illness or prescribing treatments. There are preventative measures you can take to lower your risk. Please see your healthcare provider to discuss symptoms, care options, or other medical concerns.

Hypertension Stage 2: 140/90 or higher. A combination of medication and lifestyle changes can return this to a normal level.

Hypertensive crisis: A sudden spike higher than 180/120. If it is still this high after 5 minutes, contact your medical professional immediately. If this is accompanied by chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness/weakness, change in vision, or difficulty speaking, **call 911**.

The Dangers of High Blood Pressure

People with hypertension can go on to develop serious conditions:

Heart disease and heart attack. Elevated blood pressure can damage your arteries, which decreases the flow of oxygen to your heart.

Stroke. The arteries to your brain can become blocked or burst, leading to a debilitating or deadly stroke.

Kidney disease. Over time, uncontrolled high blood pressure damages the arteries around the kidneys so they no longer deliver enough blood to the organ.

Are You Especially Prone to High Blood Pressure?

Anyone can develop hypertension. But some people have a higher risk than others. You should pay especially close attention to your blood pressure if you are:

- Diabetic
- African American
- Obese/Overweight
- Smoker