

Healthy and unhealthy blood pressure ranges

FACTS



| BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY | SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number) | and/or | DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number) |
|---|-------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|
| NORMAL | LESS THAN 120 | and | LESS THAN 80 |
| ELEVATED | 120 – 129 | and | LESS THAN 80 |
| HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1 | 130 – 139 | or | 80 – 89 |
| HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2 | 140 OR HIGHER | or | 90 OR HIGHER |
| HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately) | HIGHER THAN 180 | and/or | HIGHER THAN 120 |

How you live now affects your risk for cardiovascular diseases later in life. As early as childhood and adolescence, plaque can start accumulating in the arteries and later lead to clogged arteries.

High blood pressure is called the “silent killer” because you don’t usually know you have it. You may never experience symptoms, so don’t wait for your body to alert you that there’s a problem.



A heart attack may cause subtle symptoms. These include shortness of breath, nausea, feeling lightheaded, and pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the jaw, neck or back. Even if you’re not sure it’s a heart attack, call 911 immediately.

The American Heart Association recommends that all adults 20 or older have their cholesterol and other traditional risk factors checked every four to six years as long as their risk remains low.

The heart suddenly stops beating during cardiac arrest, not heart failure. With heart failure, the heart keeps working, but it doesn’t pump blood as well as it should. It can cause shortness of breath, swelling in the feet and ankles or persistent coughing and wheezing. During cardiac arrest, a person loses consciousness and stops normal breathing.

Our heart rate speeds up during exercise or when you get excited, and slows down when you’re sleeping. Most of the time, a change in your heartbeat is nothing to worry about. But sometimes, it can be a sign of arrhythmia, an abnormal or irregular heartbeat. Most arrhythmias are harmless, but some can last long enough to impact how well the heart works and require treatment.

Research shows that heart attack survivors who are regularly physically active and make other heart-healthy changes live longer than those who don’t. People with chronic conditions typically find that moderate-intensity activity is safe and beneficial. The American Heart Association recommends at least two and a half hours of moderate intensity physical activity each week for overall cardiovascular health.



10 Myths About Cardiovascular Disease

- “I’m too young to worry about heart disease.”
- “I’d know if I had high blood pressure because there would be warning signs.”
- “I’ll know when I’m having a heart attack because I’ll have chest pain.”
- “Diabetes won’t threaten my heart as long as I take my medication.”
- “Heart disease runs in my family, so there’s nothing I can do to prevent it.”
- “I don’t need to have my cholesterol checked until I’m middle-aged.”
- “Heart failure means the heart stops beating.”
- “This pain in my legs must be a sign of aging. I’m sure it has nothing to do with my heart.”
- “My heart is beating really fast. I must be having a heart attack.”
- “I should avoid exercise after having a heart attack.”



Be Smart About Heart Health

