

Blood Pressure



Blood pressure is the **force** of blood pushing against the walls of the **arteries** as the heart **pumps** out blood. If this pressure gets too high, it can hurt the body in many ways. High blood pressure is common. About 65 million American adults — almost 1 in 3 — have high blood pressure.

High blood pressure increases your **risk** for getting heart disease and/or kidney disease, and for having a **stroke**. It is very dangerous because many times there are no warning signs or symptoms. It does not matter what race, age, or **gender** you are. Anyone can have high blood pressure.

You can **prevent** high blood pressure by having a healthy lifestyle. This includes having a healthy weight, doing exercise and eating healthy foods. You should eat a lot of fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy foods. You should try not to put a lot of salt on your food, and, if you drink alcohol, you should drink in **moderation**.

Every time you go to the doctor, a nurse will check your blood pressure. The nurse will tell you two numbers. The following chart explains what the numbers mean:

Blood Pressure Readings	
120/80	normal
120-139/80-89	some risk
140-159/90-99	high risk
160 +/100+	bad

Vocabulary

Force: strength

Arteries: blood vessels that take blood away from your heart to the rest of your body

Pumps: pushes

Risk: chance

Stroke: when problems with blood cause someone to lose brain function

Gender: man or woman

Prevent: stop before it happens

Moderation: a small amount; a little