American Heart Association.

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Life's Essential 8 *for Menopause*

Keeping Blood Pressure in Check

Blood pressure levels can naturally rise during the menopausal transition due to changing hormones. But too high of blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke as well as dementia. High blood pressure often has no symptoms. Understand your levels and manage them with lifestyle changes or medication if recommended by a healthcare professional.



Where to Start

Blood pressure is recorded as two numbers, such as 117/76 mm Hg.

Systolic is the top number. It measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats and pumps blood through the body.
Diastolic is the bottom number. It measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart relaxes between beats.

Start by knowing your numbers. Have your blood pressure checked by a healthcare professional, and consider tracking it at home with a validated device. Some pharmacies, health clinics and fire stations have free blood pressure monitoring stations.

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top/upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom/lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120–129	and	LESS THAN 80
STAGE 1 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	130–139	or	80–89
STAGE 2 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
SEVERE HYPERTENSION (If you don't have symptoms*, call your healthcare professional)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120
HYPERTENSIVE EMERGENCY (If you have any of these symptoms*, call 911)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

*symptoms: chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness, weakness, change in vision or difficulty speaking

What to Enjoy More of

- Meals with lots of vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, legumes, whole grains, healthy nontropical oils, lean protein such as fish, seafood, low-fat dairy and, if desired, lean poultry and meats.
- Exercise can help improve your blood pressure and help lower stress.
- Sleep well. Less than 7 hours of sleep and poor- quality sleep are associated with high blood pressure.

What to do Less

- Cutting back on sodium, saturated and trans fats, added sugars and highly processed foods can help support healthy blood pressure.
- Limit sugary foods and drinks, red meats, processed meats, salty snacks, and foods that are highly processed.
- If you use tobacco or nicotine products, quitting is an important step for your heart health.
- Drinking less alcohol can also help support healthier blood pressure.



GoRedforWomen.org/Lifes8Menopause

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