

## KNOW THE BLOOD PRESSURE BASICS

### Choose a Healthier You

High blood pressure is a leading risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Make smart choices and swaps to build an overall healthy eating style. Watch calories and eat smaller portions to help support healthy blood pressure levels.

Blood pressure is typically recorded as two numbers, written as a ratio like this: 117/76 mm Hg. Read as “117 over 76” millimeters of mercury.

» **Systolic:** The top number, the higher of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats (when the heart muscle contracts).

» **Diastolic:** The bottom number, the lower of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart is resting between heart beats.

Different life stages women experience such as pregnancy and menopause can affect blood pressure levels.

### Blood Pressure Categories

» **Normal:** systolic less than 120 mm Hg and diastolic less than 80 mm Hg.

» **Elevated Blood Pressure:** systolic 120 to 129 mm Hg and diastolic less than 80 mm Hg.

» **High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1:** systolic 130 to 139 mm Hg or diastolic 80 to 89 mm Hg.

» **High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2:** systolic 140 or higher mm Hg or diastolic 90 or higher mm Hg.

» **Hypertensive Crisis (Call your doctor immediately):** systolic higher than 180 mm Hg and/or diastolic higher than 120 mm Hg.

### Track Levels

There are often no symptoms for high blood pressure. A high blood pressure diagnosis must be confirmed by a medical professional. A doctor can also evaluate any unusually low blood pressure readings. Work with your doctor or a health care professional to take blood pressure readings and get recommendations to reduce your risk of a cardiovascular event.

## SECRETS FOR SUCCESS

*Remember these tips to help you stay on track with your blood pressure goals.*

### » EAT SMART

Eat a healthy diet of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, legumes, nuts, plant-based proteins, and lean animal proteins like fish and seafood. Limit sugary foods and drinks, red or processed meats, salty foods, refined carbohydrates and highly processed foods.

### » MOVE MORE

Physical activity helps control blood pressure, weight and stress levels.

### » STAY WELL WITH WEIGHT

If you're overweight, even a slight weight loss can reduce high blood pressure.

### » DON'T BE TOXIC

Every time you smoke, vape or use tobacco, the nicotine can cause a temporary increase in blood pressure.

### » SLEEP LIKE A STAR

Short sleep (less than 7 hours a night) and poor-quality sleep are associated with high blood pressure.



## GO RED TOGETHER

Help other women know the basics of blood pressure by starting a monitoring routine with a friend and encourage each other to keep your levels in check.

Learn more at [goredforwomen.org/lifes8women](https://goredforwomen.org/lifes8women)