

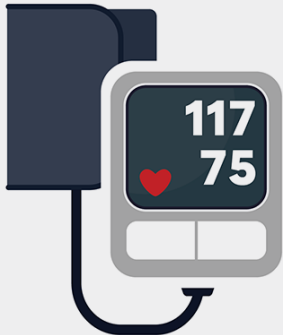


Why a Healthy Blood Pressure is Important During Pregnancy and Postpartum



What is Blood Pressure?

Your heart pumps blood through your blood vessels to reach your tissues and organs. Blood pressure is how hard your blood pushes against the walls of your blood vessels.



There are two numbers in a blood pressure reading:

Systolic (top number):

How hard your blood pushes when your heart beats

Diastolic (bottom number):

How hard your blood pushes when your heart is resting between beats



What is High Blood Pressure?

High blood pressure is also called **hypertension**. It happens when your blood is pushing too hard against your blood vessels.

High blood pressure can increase your risk for heart disease and stroke because over time, it causes damage to your blood vessels.

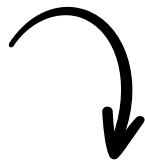
Why Does Blood Pressure Matter During Pregnancy?

Having a healthy blood pressure is important for both you and your baby. During pregnancy, there is extra strain on your body and blood vessels.

If your blood pressure is too high, it can increase your risk of pregnancy complications as well as heart disease and stroke.

What is a Healthy Blood Pressure During Pregnancy?

Managing your blood pressure can help you have a healthier pregnancy. Your health care team will check your blood pressure during checkups. Some women may also need to track their blood pressure at home.



Blood Pressure Categories During Pregnancy

During pregnancy, blood pressure ranges are different. The chart below shows what your numbers mean while you're pregnant and around delivery, and when to get care.

CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top/upper number)	and/or	DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom/lower number)
NON-HYPERTENSIVE	LESS THAN 140	and	LESS THAN 90
HYPERTENSION IN PREGNANCY*	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
SEVERE HYPERTENSION* (If you don't have symptoms, call your health care professional immediately)	160 OR HIGHER	or	110 OR HIGHER

*If you have any of these symptoms, call 911: severe headache, change in vision, abdominal pain, chest pain, significant swelling, or shortness of breath

What is a Healthy Blood Pressure After Birth (Postpartum)?

High blood pressure can happen up to a year postpartum. It's important to keep monitoring your blood pressure.

If you had high blood pressure during pregnancy, plan a blood pressure check in the first week after you go home (within 3–10 days). Keep a log of your readings and share them with your care team.

Standard Blood Pressure Categories

After pregnancy, your blood pressure can change. Ask your health care team what your healthy numbers should be and how often to check at home.

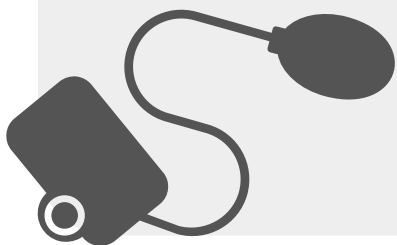
BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top/upper number)	and/or	DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom/lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120 – 129	and	LESS THAN 80
STAGE 1 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	130 – 139	or	80 – 89
STAGE 2 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
SEVERE HYPERTENSION (If you don't have symptoms*, call your health care 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 You Need To Know



High blood pressure can develop before, during or after pregnancy.



Healthy choices like eating a healthy diet, being physically active and not smoking can help lower your blood pressure. Some women may need medication to help control their blood pressure.



Talk to your health care professional. They can help you understand your current blood pressure and how to get it to a healthy range.

Visit [GoRedforWomen.org/PregnancyBP](https://www.GoRedforWomen.org/PregnancyBP) to learn more about blood pressure and pregnancy.