

Blood Pressure Awareness

What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is a way of measuring how much force is being exerted on the walls of your blood vessels (artery) as blood flows through them.

Systolic (the top number): Represents the pressure occurring while your heart is contracting to pump blood throughout your body.

Diastolic (the bottom number): Represents the pressure occurring between beats, when your heart relaxes before the next contraction.

High blood pressure damages arteries throughout the body, creating conditions where they can **burst or clog** more easily.

What kind of changes does my lifestyle have on my blood pressure?

Your best protection is knowledge, management and prevention.

High blood pressure (hypertension) is when your blood pressure is consistently too high.

To prevent high blood pressure, everyone is encouraged to **make lifestyle changes**, such as eating a healthier diet, quitting smoking, getting more exercise, etc. Below are a few examples of lifestyle changes and the potential benefit for your blood pressure.

Lifestyle change	Approximate SBP/DBP reduction
Weight reduction	5-20 mmHg/22lb weight loss
DASH eating plan	8-14 mmHg
Physical activity	4-9 mmHg
Dietary sodium restriction	2-8 mmHg
Moderation of alcohol	2-4 mmHg

**If you have high blood pressure, it is vital that you listen to your doctor. Do not implement any major lifestyle changes without discuss possible side effects with your doctor.*