

# Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is the force exerted by the blood against the artery wall as it is pumped around the body by the heart. Having high blood pressure can significantly increase the risk of suffering a heart related illness such as a heart attack or stroke. It can be divided into the following categories:

**Normal:** <120/<80

**Pre Hypertensive:** 120-139/80-89

**Stage 1 hypertension:** 140-159/90-99

**Stage 2 hypertension:**  $\geq$ 160/ $\geq$ 100



## ***Factors affecting blood pressure:***

- Exercise
- Diet
- Stress
- Alcohol
- Smoking
- Gender
- Age

## ***Causes of Hypertension***

- Obesity and overweight
- Poor Diet – especially foods high in fat and sodium
- Physical Inactivity
- High Stress levels
- Alcohol Consumption
- Smoking

## ***How to improve blood pressure***

Lifestyle modification in the form of regular exercise, weight loss, diet modification including reducing sodium intake and also reducing alcohol consumption.

## ***Medication and blood pressure during exercise***

Certain prescribed medications do have an influence on blood pressure during exercise, however such medications mainly keep blood pressure stable and in some cases decrease resting and exercise blood pressure. Discuss any medication with your GP.

## ***Exercising with high blood pressure***

If you do have high blood pressure it is important to consult with your doctor before starting an exercise program. It is essential to monitor your own symptoms in regards to chest pain, tightness in the chest, and dizziness. Avoid intense activities including heavy weight lifting and strenuous upper body exercises. Also avoid going from lying to standing positions frequently.

## ***Monitoring your blood pressure***

Having your blood pressure checked is an important part of a regular health maintenance routine and should be measured at every doctor's visit. If you have a family history of high blood pressure or are over 35 years of age it is important to have it monitored regularly. It is also possible to monitor your blood pressure at home if you have access to an automated blood pressure machine.



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