



## High blood pressure: a leading cause of heart disease

Do you know what your blood pressure number is? Most people can't feel their blood pressure increase. Your blood pressure is considered too high if the top number is 120 or higher or the bottom number is 80 or higher (see the table below). High blood pressure is also called hypertension.

High blood pressure can damage blood vessels throughout the body, leading to blindness, kidney failure, heart attack, congestive heart failure and stroke. The longer it is left untreated, the more at risk you become for these serious health problems.

Treatment for high blood pressure should include a combination of lifestyle changes and medication. The best way to find out whether your pressure is too high is to have it checked by your doctor. The chart below indicates how often you should have your blood pressure rechecked.

<b>Blood pressure category</b>	<b>Systolic (top number)</b>	<b>Diastolic (bottom number)</b>	<b>Recheck Recommendations</b>
<b>Normal</b>	Lower than 120	Lower than 80	At every visit (at least every year)
<b>Prehypertension</b> (People in this category are at a high risk for developing hypertension.)	120-139	80-89	At every visit (at least once a year)
<b>Hypertension Stage I</b> (If you have diabetes or kidney disease, hypertension stage I starts when top number is 130 or higher or the bottom number is 80 or higher.)	140-159	90-99	Within 2 months



### **What is blood pressure?**

Blood pressure measures the force of the blood pushing against the walls of your blood vessels when your heart beats and when it is at rest between beats. A blood pressure reading has two numbers, for example: 120/80 mm/Hg. The top number (systolic) measures the pressure in your blood vessels when your heart beats. The bottom number (diastolic) measures the pressure while your heart rests between beats.

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