



Blood Pressure UK

Helping you to lower your
blood pressure

Do you have high blood pressure?

1 in 3 adults in the UK has high blood pressure, and 1 in 9 adults has high blood pressure and does not know it.

Do YOU Know your Numbers?



Why is my blood pressure so important?

High blood pressure increases your risk of having a stroke or heart attack. It is also a risk factor for kidney disease, dementia and other illnesses. If you have high blood pressure, by lowering it with lifestyle changes and medicines you can lower your risk of these problems.

What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is the pressure of blood in your arteries. If it is too high over a period of time and is not treated you will be more at risk of having a stroke or heart attack. High blood pressure usually has no symptoms which is why many people do not know they have it.

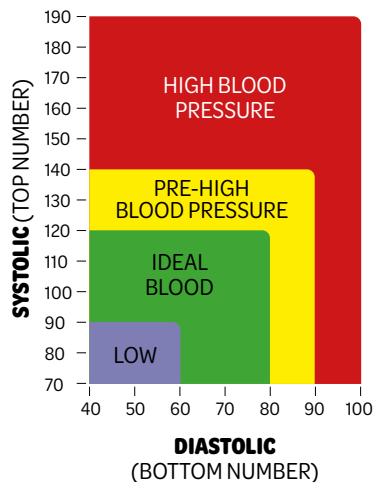
The only way to find out if you have high blood pressure is to have regular checks and remember the numbers in the same way as your height and weight. In other words, Know your Numbers! – and encourage your family and friends to do the same.

What do the numbers mean?

When you have your blood pressure measured it is written like this: 140/90mmHg, which is said “140 over 90”. The first number is your **SYSTOLIC** pressure, when your heart pushes blood round your body. The second is the **DIASTOLIC**, when your heart relaxes.

What should my blood pressure be?

A healthy blood pressure is 120/80 or less. You should aim to get your blood pressure to this level. 140/90 is the level used to diagnose high blood pressure, whatever your age. If your blood pressure is consistently raised at this level or above, it will need to be lowered, to reduce your risk of stroke and heart attack. Here’s a guide to blood pressure levels. Remember, it is possible to have a one-off high reading and a proper diagnosis can only be given by a doctor.



What causes high blood pressure?

For most people there is no definite cause, however, some things make it more likely:

- 🕒 A family history of high blood pressure, heart attack or stroke
- 🕒 If you are of African or Caribbean descent
- 🕒 If you are of South Asian descent
- 🕒 Your age – blood pressure tends to go up as we get older.

Your lifestyle can also affect your blood pressure. For example, being overweight, eating too much salt, doing too little exercise, drinking too much alcohol and not eating enough fruit and vegetables can cause high blood pressure.

How can I lower my blood pressure?

You can lower your blood pressure by changing your lifestyle and, if necessary, by taking medication as directed by your doctor. Everyone can lower their blood pressure by making a few simple lifestyle changes.

Eat less salt

Eating too much salt raises your blood pressure. An adult should eat less than 6g of salt a day, but most of us eat much more than this. 75% of the salt we eat is “hidden” in our foods, so make sure you check food labels for salt content and don’t add it to your food.

Eat more fruit and vegetables

These are the best source of potassium in the diet, which helps to lower blood pressure.

Try to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Don’t forget that frozen, canned and dried varieties count too.





Drink alcohol in moderation

Think about what you are drinking. You should drink no more than 14 units of alcohol a week for BOTH men and women.



Lose weight if you need to

If you are overweight then your blood pressure is likely to be higher than if you were the correct weight for your height. If you lose the excess weight you will probably find that your blood pressure reduces.



Be active

Aim for half an hour of exercise on five days of the week. The exercise needs to make you breathe faster and warm you up. How about a lunchtime walk or some energetic gardening? You don't have to go to the gym to be doing yourself some good.



Medication

Some people will also need to take medication prescribed by their doctor to lower their blood pressure. Today's blood pressure tablets are very effective in lowering your blood pressure and reducing your long-term risk of stroke and heart attack.

Can I check my blood pressure at home?

A proper diagnosis of high blood pressure can only be given by a doctor, but many people find it useful to keep an eye on their blood pressure by checking theirs at home with a digital home blood pressure monitor.



There are many on the market but Blood Pressure UK advises that you should use one that has been clinically validated.

Our website www.bloodpressureuk.org has a list of validated monitors. There is also downloadable advice on how to monitor your blood pressure at home.

For more information go to www.bloodpressureuk.org or click the QR code.



Blood pressure reading

What this means

Action needed

120/80mmHg or less

Your blood pressure is at the optimal level but the lower you can get it the better.

Follow the lifestyle advice in this leaflet to prevent your blood pressure going up with age.

Between 121/81-139/89mmHg

Your blood pressure is higher than it should be – take action now to lower it.

Make lifestyle changes outlined in this leaflet to help lower your blood pressure to below 120/80mmHg.

140/90mmHg or higher

If your readings are **consistently** at or above this level you have high blood pressure – take action now to lower it.

See your GP if required. Visit your local pharmacy / practice nurse or self-test. Make the lifestyle changes in this leaflet and take medication if advised by your doctor.

Please record your blood pressure readings below:

Date **BP** **Action**

Date **BP** **Action**

Date **BP** **Action**

Keep this card safe and have your blood pressure checked in a year, unless instructed to get it checked sooner

If you have a raised blood pressure reading you should not ignore it. It is important that you have further checks to see if you have high blood pressure or not. A proper diagnosis can only be given by a doctor. High blood pressure is a serious condition but can be successfully treated.

Join Blood Pressure UK for just £2.00 a month...

**Blood Pressure UK is the nation's leading charity
aiding those with high blood pressure.**

Join for just £2.00/month (or £24.00/year), receive practical support, easy-to-understand information, and ongoing reassurance. Over 90% of our members credit our support for reducing and managing their blood pressure. Sign up today to enjoy exclusive benefits.

- E-Positive Pressure is our popular members magazine and keeps you up to date on the world of blood pressure and how it affects you. Useful and informative, it includes a wide variety of features, competitions and recipes.
- A range of free booklets and information sheets to help you understand more about high blood pressure and how to live with it. The leaflets aim to answer all your questions and topics include healthy eating, home monitoring, as well as the various types of medications you will encounter.



“...Blood Pressure UK is there for people with high blood pressure to get constructive support and explanations. You only get nine minutes during a doctor’s appointment so understandably your GP doesn’t always have time to answer all your questions and concerns, and that’s where Blood Pressure UK can help.”

Edric Aris, Blood Pressure UK volunteer

Order form

Membership costs £2.00 a month (if paid by Direct Debit) or £24.00 a year.

It can be ordered online at: www.bloodpressureuk.org, or by completing the order form below and returning it to:

Blood Pressure UK, FREEPOST Plus RTCS-AATG-ACSU, Wolfson Institute, Charterhouse Square, London EC1M 6BQ. No stamp is needed in the UK.

Title: _____ First Name: _____

Surname: _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email address: _____

Gift Aid. Are you a UK taxpayer?

giftaidit

Are you a UK Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax payer? Use Gift Aid and you can make your membership worth more as Blood Pressure UK can reclaim the income tax paid from HMRC at no cost to you. Just tick the box below, it’s that simple.

Yes, I am a UK Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax payer and I would like all donations I have made in the last 4 years, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise to be treated as Gift Aid donations. I have paid an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April one year to 5 April the next) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that BPUK will claim in that year.

Online Banking

You can pay for your Blood Pressure UK membership using your own online bank account. Please complete your personal details on this form (and return it to Blood Pressure UK) and direct payment to account number: **01152878**, sort code: **30 96 07**. Please quote your name and ‘BPUK’ as a reference.

I have made a payment to Blood Pressure UK using my own online bank account.

