

Understanding and Addressing Hypertension & Heart Health in Your Community: A Quick Guide for CHWs



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What is high blood pressure?

- Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against artery walls. Arteries are blood vessels that carry blood from the heart to other parts of the body.
- Hypertension, or high blood pressure, can lead to negative health effects including heart failure, heart attack, stroke, and chronic kidney disease.
- Table 1 outlines the levels that are generally categorized as normal blood pressure, at-risk blood pressure, and high blood pressure.

Table 1: Blood pressure levels

	systolic		Diastolic
Normal blood pressure	< 120 mmHg	AND	< 80 mmHg
Elevated blood pressure	120-129 mmHg	AND	<80 mmHg
Stage 1 high blood pressure	130-139 mmHg	OR	≥ 80-89mmHg
Stage 2 high blood pressure	≥ 140 mmHg	OR	≥ 90 mmHg

- “Systolic blood pressure”, which is the top number of a blood pressure reading, means the amount of pressure placed on artery when the heart beats.
- “Diastolic blood pressure”, the bottom number of a blood pressure reading, means the amount of pressure placed on artery when the heart rests between heart beats.

How is blood pressure measured?

- Healthcare providers use a cuff with a gauge and listen to the pulse with a stethoscope. Alternatively, healthcare professionals may have a blood pressure machine that measures blood pressure automatically.
- Blood pressure machines are available in many pharmacies. Home-monitoring blood pressure devices are also available for purchase.

This project was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under cooperative agreement number U30CS09744, Technical Assistance to Community and Migrant Health Centers and Homeless for \$617,235.00 with 0% of the total NCA project financed with non-federal sources. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.

What are signs & symptoms of high blood pressure?

- Most often, high blood pressure does not cause signs or symptoms. For this reason, high blood pressure is referred to as “the silent killer”.
- In rare circumstances, headaches or vomiting may occur.
- Measuring blood pressure is the best way to know if it is too high.

How is high blood pressure managed?

- *Healthcare Provider &/or Medication:* Healthcare providers will assist patients in reducing their blood pressure to recommended levels. Providers may prescribe medications to control blood pressure. The type, amount, and frequency of medication determined by the provider need to be followed closely.
- *Lifestyle behaviors:* The following behaviors can help in controlling blood pressure levels.
 - Self-monitor blood pressure
 - Control / lose weight
 - Be physically active for 90 - 150 minutes a week
 - Limit alcohol consumption
 - Stop using tobacco
 - Modify diet—eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
 - Consume less than 2400 mg of sodium per day

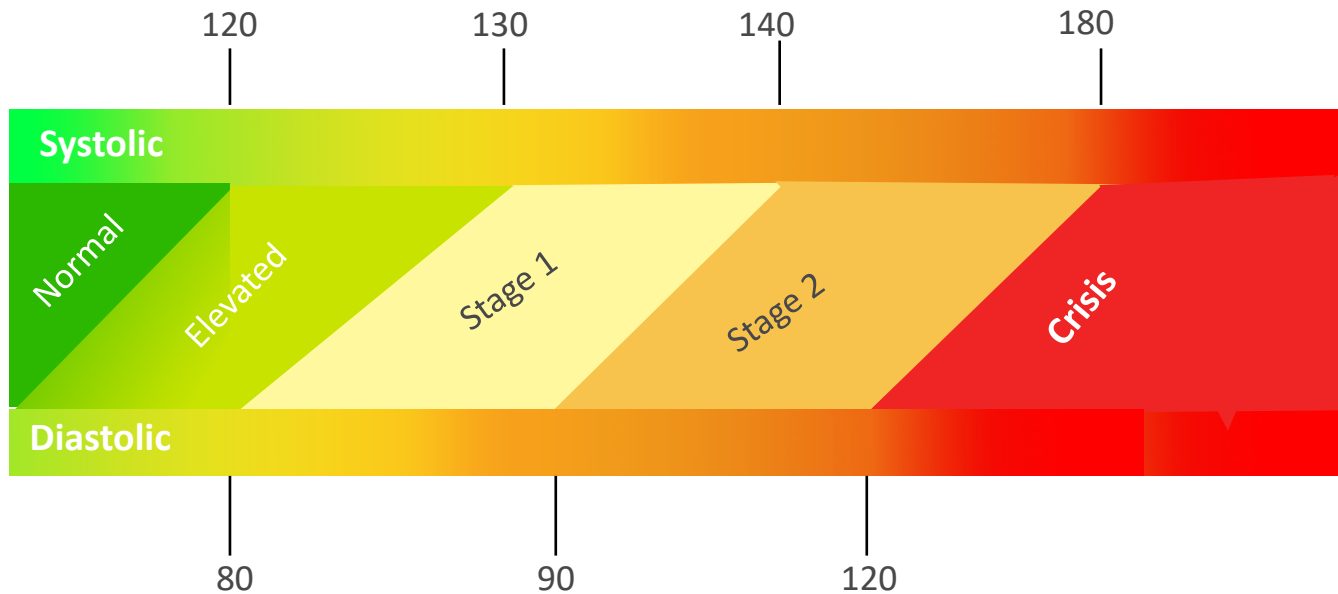
How is high blood pressure prevented?

High blood pressure can be prevented by following the management instructions listed above.



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For Your Health: Know Your Blood Pressure



Blood pressure testing gives you measurements for the amount of pressure placed on arteries when the heart beats (systolic) and when it rests between beats (diastolic). Results give you a good idea of how hard your heart is working to pump blood to the rest of your body.

Every individual is different and you should always refer to your physician/medical provider to determine what blood pressure levels are safe for you. Different health conditions may warrant different blood pressure goals.

My Blood Pressure Result Today: _____

My Goal for Next Blood Pressure Result: _____

Date					
Blood Pressure					
Weight					
Body Mass Index (BMI)					