



Blood pressure

What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure (BP) is a measurement of the force your blood puts on blood vessel walls as it travels through your body.

High BP is one of the most important risk factors for stroke. If you consistently have high BP over 140/90 mm Hg then you should make an appointment to see your doctor.

Blood pressure does not stay the same all the time. The levels for normal and high BP are a guide only. See below.

Normal: Normal blood pressure is around 120/80 or lower.
High-normal blood pressure is between 120/80 and 140/90.

High: High blood pressure is when your blood pressure is consistently over 140/90. This is known as 'hypertension'.

Blood pressure varies and if the reading is high your doctor may measure your BP on a number of occasions, offer drug treatment as well as lifestyle advice. You may be asked to monitor your blood pressure at home. There are a number of different blood pressure devices you may use to do this. Talk to your doctor about what is best for you.

What causes high blood pressure?

There are a number of risk factors that have been linked to high BP. The more risk factors you have, the greater your risk of stroke. These include:

- A family history of high BP
- Age (blood pressure can rise as people get older)
- Men are more likely to have high BP than women
- Being overweight
- Excessive alcohol drinking
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Lack of exercise
- A diet high in salt

Lifestyle changes to lower blood pressure

There are a number of lifestyle changes to make to lower your BP and your risk of stroke, heart attack and diabetes. It's important to:

1. Know your numbers and keep your blood pressure down
2. Shape up – Keep your weight within a healthy range for your age and gender
3. Eat foods that are good for you
4. Get active!
5. Cut down or quit smoking

Disclaimer notice: The BP Tracker and accompanying information is provided for information purposes only. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice, or a comprehensive statement of the nature and consequences of high blood pressure. Blood pressure can vary from day to day and if you believe you are suffering from high blood pressure or have any other concerns about your health you are advised to see professional medical advice.