

# Hypertension (HTN) toolkit

A toolkit designed to help you  
manage high blood pressure.



# What is high blood pressure?

High blood pressure, or hypertension (HTN), is when the force of blood pumping through the arteries\* is too strong. Hypertension forces the heart to work harder to pump blood and may cause the arteries to become narrow or stiff. Untreated or uncontrolled hypertension can cause a heart attack, heart failure, a stroke, kidney disease and other problems.

## How to understand blood pressure numbers

A blood pressure reading consists of a higher number over a lower number — the systolic reading (top number) and the diastolic reading (bottom number). The systolic reading is the pressure in your arteries when the heart pumps and the diastolic reading is the pressure in your arteries when the heart is resting between pumps or beats. Ideally, your blood pressure should be below 120/80.

\*Arteries: blood vessels that carry blood from the heart throughout the body.

## Importance of measuring blood pressure

### Blood pressure varies throughout the day

- Readings are often a little higher in the morning.
- Your blood pressure might be slightly lower at home than in a medical office.

### Home blood pressure monitoring is not a substitute for medical visits

- Home blood pressure monitors aren't always correct.
- If you get consistent readings, don't stop taking them.
- Don't change your medications or diet without talking to your provider first.

### Unusual increases in your blood pressure readings can happen

- Ask your provider when you should seek medical attention if your blood pressure stays higher than normal.

### Recommended blood pressure checks are different for everyone

- If your blood pressure is well controlled, ask your provider how often you need to check it. You may be able to check it only once a day or less often.

## How to get the best blood pressure reading

A home digital blood pressure monitor makes it easy to keep track of your blood pressure. For the most accurate reading, do the following:

- 1 No caffeine, tobacco or exercise for 30 minutes before the reading.
- 2 Sit quietly for five minutes before the reading. While doing the reading, sit in a chair with back support.
- 3 Place your feet flat on the floor and then place your upper bare arm in the cuff, one inch from the bend of your elbow, so your arm is resting at heart.
- 4 Relax and don't talk during the measurement.

## How to read a blood pressure chart

- ✓ Find your systolic reading (top number) in the left-hand column.
- ✓ Find your diastolic reading (bottom number) in the right-hand column.

If your readings are in a different “action category,” follow the action category closest to the top of the chart. For example, a blood pressure reading of 120/88 is in the “high, stage 1 category” action category.

Systolic reading (top number)	Diastolic reading (bottom number)	Action category
Higher than 180	Higher than 120	<b>Emergency: hypertensive crisis</b> See your provider or visit a hospital emergency room as soon as possible.
140-180	90-120	<b>Urgent high, stage 2</b> See your provider within one week. If you’re being treated for high blood pressure, keep following the treatment plan ordered by your provider.
130-139	80-89	<b>High, stage 1</b> See your provider within one to two months. If you’re being treated for high blood pressure, keep following the treatment plan ordered by your provider.
120-129	Lower than 80	<b>Elevated blood pressure</b> Have your blood pressure re-checked within six months. Consider healthy lifestyle changes to improve your blood pressure.
Lower than 120	Lower than 80	<b>Normal</b> If you’re being treated for high blood pressure, follow up with your provider on a regular basis. If you’re not being treated for high blood pressure, have your blood pressure re-checked within two years.



## Tips on lowering your blood pressure

By making lifestyle changes outlined below, you can lower your blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart disease. Controlling blood pressure with a healthy lifestyle change might prevent, delay or reduce the need for medication.

Lifestyle change	Benefit
<b>Implement healthy weight loss</b>	Weight loss is one of the most effective lifestyle changes for controlling blood pressure. Losing a small amount of weight can help reduce blood pressure.
<b>Exercise regularly</b>	Regular physical activity can lower high blood pressure. As a general goal, aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day.
<b>Eat a healthy diet</b>	Eating a diet rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and low in saturated fat and cholesterol can lower high blood pressure.  Examples of eating plans that can help control blood pressure are the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension ( <a href="#">DASH diet</a> ) and the <a href="#">Mediterranean diet</a> .
<b>Reduce (salt) sodium intake</b>	A small reduction of sodium can improve heart health and reduce high blood pressure.
<b>Limit alcohol intake</b>	Limiting alcohol to less than one drink a day for women or two drinks a day for men can help lower blood pressure.
<b>Stop smoking</b>	Stopping smoking helps lower blood pressure; it can also help you track if your medication and lifestyle changes are working.
<b>Monitor your blood pressure at home and get regular checkups</b>	Home monitoring can help you keep tabs on your blood pressure. It can help ensure your medications and lifestyle changes are working.
<b>Get support</b>	Supportive family and friends are important to good health.



# My personal action plan

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

The most important person managing your blood pressure (BP) is **you**. Talk to your health care provider to help you develop your action plan.

**Current blood pressure:** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

## Yearly lab tests:

- Comprehensive/Basic Metabolic Panel
- Urine Albumin/Creatinine ratio (ACR)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## My personal blood pressure (BP) management goal:

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## Barriers to achieving this goal:

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## Benefits of achieving this goal:

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## My plan to achieve this goal:

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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia en su idioma. Consulte al número de Servicio al Cliente que está en la parte de atrás de su tarjeta de identificación de miembro. (TTY: 711).

ملاحظة: إذا كنت تتحدث العربية، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. يرجى الاتصال برقم خدمة العملاء على الجانب الخلفي من بطاقة عضويتك الشخصية. (رقم هاتف الصم والبكم: 711).