

What does my blood pressure reading mean?

Normal blood pressure is 120/80 or lower. High blood pressure is 140/90 or higher. If your blood pressure is between 120/80 and 140/90, you have something called "pre-hypertension" (you are in the beginning stages and at risk of high blood pressure). Only your doctor can tell you whether you have high blood pressure. Most doctors will check your blood pressure several times on different days before deciding that you have high blood pressure. If you have high blood pressure or pre-hypertension, you need to check your blood pressure regularly and keep in touch with your family doctor.

| | Systolic (first number) | Diastolic (second number) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Normal | Less than 120 | Less than 80 |
| Prehypertension | 120–139 | 80–89 |
| High blood pressure: Stage 1* | 140–159 | 90–99 |
| High blood pressure: Stage 2 | 160 or higher | 100 or over |

**If you have diabetes or kidney disease, high blood pressure ranges may be lower than it is for other people. Talk to your doctor about what is considered high blood pressure for you.*

Hypotension, or low blood pressure, happens when your systolic pressure is consistently (several blood pressure readings over several days) below 90--or 25 points below your normal reading. Hypotension can be a sign of something serious such as shock, a life threatening condition. Contact your doctor immediately if you are dizzy or fainting.

Source

Written by familydoctor.org editorial staff.

American Academy of Family Physicians