

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 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.

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.



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.



For more information on how to lower your blood pressure, please visit www.bloodpressureuk.org

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.

Blood Pressure UK is the leading charity for people with high blood pressure.

If you have high blood pressure, our information and support services, including our membership, can help you to control it. We provide practical information on all aspects of the condition including treatment, lifestyle and home monitoring.

Return your details to us on the slip provided in this leaflet for a free information pack or visit www.bloodpressureuk.org

If you have any questions about your blood pressure, call us on **020 7882 6255**

Blood Pressure UK is an operating name of the Blood Pressure Association.

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The Wolfson Institute, Charterhouse Square, London EC1M 6BQ



Blood Pressure UK

Helping you to lower your blood pressure



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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?

Free Information Pack

Blood Pressure UK is the country's leading charity providing information and support to people with high blood pressure.

For more information on high blood pressure please visit our website at www.bloodpressureuk.org or telephone us on **020 7882 6255**.

For a free blood pressure information pack complete the form below.

Reduce Your Blood Pressure Now! - Join us for only £2 a month!

Over 90% of our members say that membership helps them to reduce and manage their own blood pressure, through access to a telephone helpline, a members magazine, regular email newsletters and a range of information booklets. Join today for only £2 a month by visiting www.bloodpressureuk.org or by telephoning: **020 7882 6255**.

Text NUMBERS to 70003 to donate £3.00 to Blood Pressure UK

Cost £3.00 plus 1 standard rate text message. £2.73 of your donation will go to Blood Pressure UK. Must have bill payers permission

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email _____

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Please return this slip to:
Blood Pressure UK
FREEPOST RTCS-AATG-ACSU
Wolfson Institute
Charterhouse Square
London, EC1M 6BQ

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.

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.

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 (see overleaf).

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.

