

# Understanding Your Screening Numbers

## Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is often called the “silent killer” because there are typically no signs or symptoms. Left untreated, high blood pressure could lead to heart attack, stroke, heart failure, kidney disease, and vision loss.



### Understanding your Blood Pressure Reading

**120** →

The top number is your **systolic** pressure. This measures the amount of pressure on the walls of your blood vessels when the heart beats.

**80** →

The bottom number is your **diastolic** pressure. This measures the amount of pressure on the walls of your blood vessels when the heart is relaxed (between heart beats).

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom number)
Normal	Less than 120	and	Less than 80
Elevated	120-129	and	Less than 80
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension Stage 1)	130-139	or	80-89
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension Stage 2)	140 or higher	or	90 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis (consult your doctor immediately)	Higher than 180	and/or or	Higher than 120

#### Modifiable Risk Factors for High Blood Pressure

- Overweight/Obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Smoking
- Excessive alcohol intake
- Diabetes
- High cholesterol
- Poor diet quality

#### Risk Factors for High Blood Pressure that Cannot be Controlled

- Family history of high blood pressure
- Race/ethnicity
- Age
- Gender (males)
- Chronic kidney disease
- Obstructive sleep apnea

Source: 2017 High Blood Pressure Clinical Practice Guidelines



### Checking your Blood Pressure at Home

*Avoid smoking, caffeinated beverages, or exercise within 30 minutes of taking blood pressure.*

**Remain still.** Allow 5+ minutes of quiet rest before taking blood pressure measurement.

**Sit correctly:**

- Sit with back straight and supported (ideally not on a sofa or lounge chair)
- Sit with feet flat on the floor and legs uncrossed
- Keep arm supported on a flat surface (such as a table), with arm at heart level.

**Place cuff correctly.** Bottom of cuff should be placed directly above the bend of your elbow.

**Take multiple readings.** Take at least 2 readings 1 minute apart in morning before taking medications and in evening before supper.

**Record all readings accurately.** Monitors with built-in memory should be brought to all clinic appointments. You can also record your blood pressures by hand or using a mobile app.

# Improving Your Numbers Through Lifestyle

## Blood Pressure



Canada Eat Well Plate

### Weight Loss

- For individuals with weight categorized as overweight or obese, **weight reduction is recommended**. Safe weight loss is 1-2 pounds per week through behavior and lifestyle changes.

### Eat a balanced diet rich in plant-based foods

- Aim to have at least half of the food on your plate at every meal be a vegetable and/or fruit. A balanced diet also includes whole grains, low-fat dairy or dairy alternatives, and healthy proteins.
- Reduce saturated fat found in cheese, full-fat dairy, fried foods, butter, fatty cuts of meat, and processed foods.
- The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stopping Hypertension) is an ideal diet to follow for individuals with high blood pressure or at risk for developing hypertension.

### Reduce sodium

- For healthy adults, the national recommendation is to limit sodium to less than 2,300 mg per day.
- For individuals with high blood pressure, it is recommended to limit sodium to less than 1,500 mg per day.
- Over 70% of sodium intake in the American diet comes from processed, packaged, and restaurant foods! To reduce sodium in your diet, make a goal to prepare most of your meals at home using whole food ingredients.

### Eat foods rich in potassium

- Potassium is a mineral that helps maintain normal blood pressure by limiting the effects of sodium. It can be found in many foods including baked potatoes with skin, beans and lentils, plain nonfat yogurt, sweet potatoes, fish (e.g. salmon, mackerel, halibut, tuna), soybeans, leafy greens, bananas, and avocados.

### Exercise regularly

- Physical inactivity and a sedentary lifestyle is associated with an increase in blood pressure. The American Heart Association recommends at least **150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity and two days of muscle-strengthen activity**.

### Limit alcohol consumption

- Limit alcohol to **no more than 1 drink per day for women and 2 drinks per day for men**.

### Quit smoking

- Smokers are at a higher risk of heart disease compared to non-smokers**. If you currently smoke, quitting may help improve your blood pressure readings.

### Notes

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### Quick Tip

Check the % Daily Value for a quick way to evaluate sodium content of a food

**5% or less = low in sodium**  
**20% or higher = high in sodium**

Nutrition Facts	
2 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	1 cup (237mL)
Amount per serving	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>160</b>
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 4g	<b>6%</b>
Saturated Fat 0.5g	<b>3%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 680mg	<b>28%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 24g	<b>8%</b>
Dietary Fiber 8g	<b>32%</b>
Total Sugars 5g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	<b>0%</b>
Protein 7g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 29mg	3%
Iron 1mg	4%
Potassium 521mg	11%

\* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.