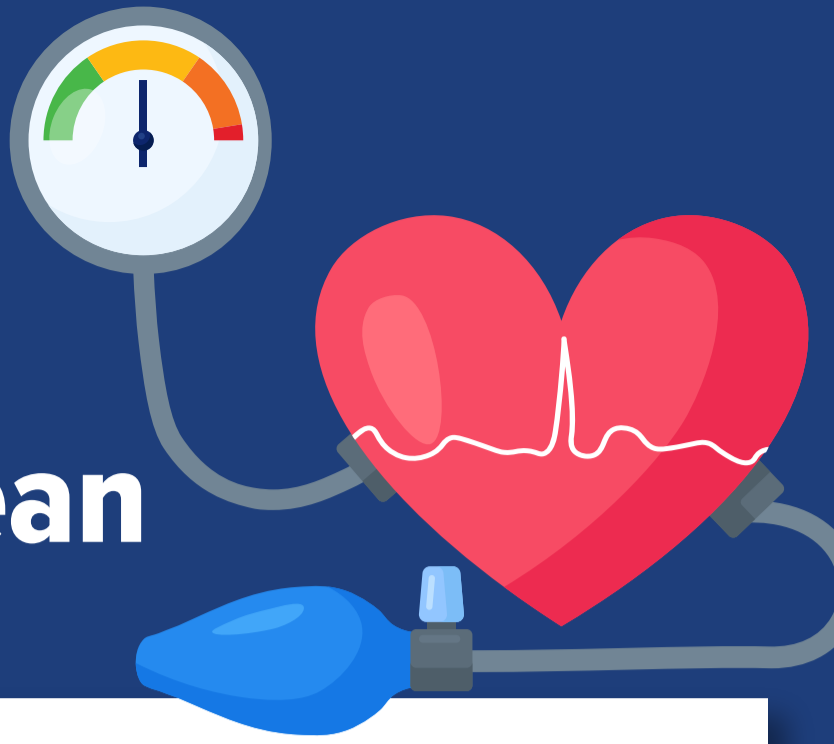


What Blood Pressure Numbers Mean



Your blood pressure reading is recorded as two numbers:

Systolic blood pressure
(the top number)



how much pressure your blood is exerting against your artery walls **during heartbeats**

Diastolic blood pressure
(the bottom number)



how much pressure your blood is exerting against your artery walls **while the heart rests between beats**

Normal Blood Pressure

A stylized icon of a blood pressure monitor with a white screen displaying the numbers 120 over 80. The icon is green and black.

120
80

Normal = $\frac{120 \text{ or less}}{80 \text{ or less}}$

Systolic blood pressure (the top number) is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease in people over 50. As we age, systolic blood pressure gradually increases as the large arteries get stiff and plaque builds up.

Elevated Blood Pressure

A stylized icon of a blood pressure monitor with a white screen displaying the numbers 122 over 82. The icon is yellow and black.

122
82

Elevated = $\frac{120 - 129}{\text{more than } 80}$

If your blood pressure falls in this range, talk with your doctor about steps to lower your numbers. Eat healthy and be physically active to keep your blood pressure in the normal range. Taking a 20 minute walk every day can help.

High Blood Pressure/Hypertension

A stylized icon of a blood pressure monitor with a white screen displaying the numbers 130 over 82. The icon is orange and black.

130
82

Hypertension = $\frac{130 \text{ or more}}{80 \text{ or more}}$

If your blood pressure is consistently at or above 130/80, you are at increased risk of heart attack or stroke. Your doctor may prescribe lifestyle changes and blood pressure medication, depending on your risk of atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease.

Blood Pressure Emergency

A stylized icon of a blood pressure monitor with a white screen displaying the numbers 180 over 120. The icon is red and black.

180
120

Emergency = $\frac{180}{120 \text{ or higher}}$

You should seek emergency care if you see extremely high blood pressure readings, especially if symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, severe headache, vision changes or confusion are present. This requires immediate medical care.

If you have concerns about your blood pressure or another cardiovascular issue, make an appointment with a heart specialist at National Jewish Health.

njhealth.org
1.877.CALLNJH (1.877.225.5654)

 **National Jewish Health**[®]

What Blood Pressure Numbers Mean

