

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Blood Pressure

What is blood pressure?

This refers to the pressure of blood against your artery walls. Blood pressure is given in two numbers. The top, higher number measures the pressure when your heart beats. The bottom, lower number measures the pressure when your heart rests. A number of factors and conditions can cause high blood pressure. These include unhealthy eating, tobacco use, alcohol consumption, and physical inactivity.

High blood pressure increases your chance of having:

- a heart attack
- a stroke
- kidney disease
- other serious illnesses

So, visit your doctor and get a quick test at least every five years, starting at age 20. Get checked more often if your doctor says you should. It's important to know your number.

A normal blood pressure level is below 120/80.

Blood pressure is given in two numbers.

120 / 80

The top, higher number measures the pressure when your heart beats.

The bottom, lower number measures the pressure when your heart rests.

Tips to lower your blood pressure numbers and reduce your risk:

- Eat healthier: add fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy into your diet
- Reduce the sodium in your meals
- Exercise often, even walking can help
- If you drink alcohol, try to consume less
- Reduce tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke

Talk with your healthcare provider to find out your blood pressure numbers and get in control. Together, you can make a plan that is right for you.

LEARN MORE AT
www.mainehearthealth.org



Paul R. LePage, Governor

Department of Health
and Human Services

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