

Blood Pressure Quicksheet

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What is High Blood Pressure?

High blood pressure (hypertension) is when blood pushes too hard against artery walls. Called the “silent killer,” it often shows no symptoms.

Risk Factors:

Modifiable: smoking, diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity, unhealthy diet (high sodium), excess alcohol, inactivity

Non-modifiable: family history, age, gender (higher in men), kidney disease, race/ethnicity, sleep apnea

Why it Matters?

High Blood Pressure:

- Affects nearly 1 in 2 US adults
- Often goes undetected without regular screenings
- Increases risk of heart attack, stroke, vision loss, kidney disease
- Can be prevented or managed with healthy lifestyle changes

Low Blood Pressure:

- Increases risk of falls and injuries
- If severe or untreated, may lead to shock, organ damage, or impaired brain function

Mental Health & Wellness:

- Chronic stress, anxiety, and depression can disrupt blood pressure regulation
- Managing mental health supports cardiovascular health and quality of life
- Untreated mental health conditions may increase risk of other chronic diseases

What is Low Blood Pressure?

Low blood pressure (hypotension) occurs when blood pressure drops too low, causing dizziness, fatigue, blurred vision, and increased risk of falls.

Causes: dehydration, some medications, heart problems, endocrine disorders, blood loss, nutritional deficiencies, immobility

Prevention & Management:

For High Blood Pressure: exercise regularly, healthy diet, limit sodium and alcohol, maintain healthy weight, quit smoking, monitor blood pressure

For Low Blood Pressure: stay hydrated, eat small meals, increase salt if advised, rise slowly, avoid heat/standing long

Blood Pressure & Mental Health/Wellness:

Mental health can impact blood pressure in different ways. Chronic stress often raises blood pressure, while anxiety and depression may contribute to both increases and decreases.

Wellness Tips: practice mindfulness, stay active, prioritize sleep, maintain social connections, limit caffeine and alcohol, and seek professional support when needed.

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower 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	HIGHER THAN 120

Source: American Heart Association. High Blood Pressure Rainbow Chart. Available at: <https://www.heart.org/-/media/Files/Health-Topics/High-Blood-Pressure/HBP-rainbow-chart-English.pdf>