

## My Blood Pressure Goal:

Systolic blood pressure (the top number) →

Diastolic blood pressure (the bottom number) →

### QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM:

What has changed since my last visit?

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What specific goals do I have for my next visit?

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What are the side effects of my medications?

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Are there generic versions of my medicine or other ways I can reduce the cost?

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### IMPORTANT:

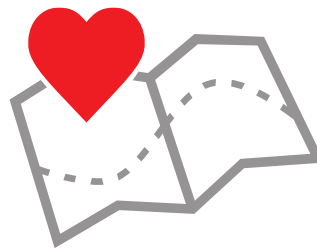
If you ever experience chest pain, shortness of breath, headache, dizziness, or back or stomach pains,

**CALL 911.**



### KNOW YOUR NUMBERS!

Get your blood pressure checked regularly by your health care provider. You can also talk to them about using an at-home blood pressure monitoring device or locations in your community to get your blood pressure checked. Stay on the path to your healthy blood pressure goal!



For more information, please visit  
[mass.gov/bloodpressure](https://mass.gov/bloodpressure)



MASSACHUSETTS  
DEPARTMENT  
OF PUBLIC HEALTH

HD2194

## My Path to **Healthy Blood Pressure**



**If you have high blood pressure, learn steps you can take to control it.**



## What is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is a measurement of how hard your heart is working to pump blood through your arteries. Your blood pressure reading has a top and bottom number:

### Systolic blood pressure (the top number)

measures the pressure in your arteries as your heart beats. → **Less than 120**

### Diastolic blood pressure (the bottom number)

measures the pressure in your arteries as your heart rests between beats. → **Less than 80**

## What is High Blood Pressure?

High Blood Pressure is when your blood pressure is

**130 or higher**

**80 or higher**

High blood pressure is also called **hypertension**. It's known as the "silent killer" because you can have it without any symptoms. It can be treated and controlled with healthy lifestyle changes and medication.

**If it's not controlled**, high blood pressure can lead to health problems, like stroke, heart attack, heart or kidney disease.

## I WAS DIAGNOSED WITH HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE. NOW WHAT?

- 1 Learn your blood pressure goal.** Your provider will help you set the right goal for your blood pressure.
- 2 Talk to your provider about blood pressure medication.** If you're prescribed medication, always take it as directed, even if you don't feel sick.
- 3 Stay on a healthy path.** Find ways to make healthy changes below. And be sure to get your blood pressure checked regularly.

## Healthy Steps Make A Difference



Walking **30 minutes, 5 days a week** can decrease your blood pressure (the top number) by **10 points**.



Quitting tobacco/smoking can decrease your blood pressure by **5 – 10 points** (the top number).



Losing **5 – 10 lbs. of weight** can decrease your blood pressure by **5 points** (the top number).

**EVERY 5 POINT DECREASE**  
in blood pressure  
**REDUCES YOUR RISK**  
of having a stroke by **34%**  
and risk for heart attack by **21%!**

## DESTINATION: Healthy Blood Pressure

Get on the path to lower blood pressure with these healthy steps...



### Eat Less Salt

Eating too much salt—also called sodium—may raise your blood pressure. Compare food labels and choose foods with less sodium.

### Choose Healthy Foods

Eat more vegetables, whole grains, fruits, fish, lean poultry, and low-fat dairy products. Eat less red meat.



### Get Moving

Moderate physical activity makes your heart stronger so it can pump blood more easily. It also helps you handle stress, another cause of high blood pressure. Set your target for 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity, at least 5 days a week.

### Quit Smoking

Smoking can raise your blood pressure and put you at risk for a heart attack and stroke. But your risk can drop quickly—in as little as two weeks to three months after you quit. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit [makesmokinghistory.org](http://makesmokinghistory.org).



### Limit Alcohol

Drinking too much alcohol can raise your blood pressure. Ask your health care provider about what's healthy for you.

