

High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure - also called hypertension - is a major health problem in the world today. 50 million Americans have it - that's about 1 in every 4 adults. In 1998, it was directly responsible for more than 44,000 deaths and it contributed to the deaths of another 210,000 Americans.

Hypertension is sometimes called "the silent killer" because it doesn't have any symptoms, yet it can be causing serious damage inside the body. It is a primary cause of stroke, heart disease, heart failure, kidney disease, and blindness. It triples a person's chance of developing heart disease, and boosts the chance of stroke seven times and the chance of congestive heart failure six times.

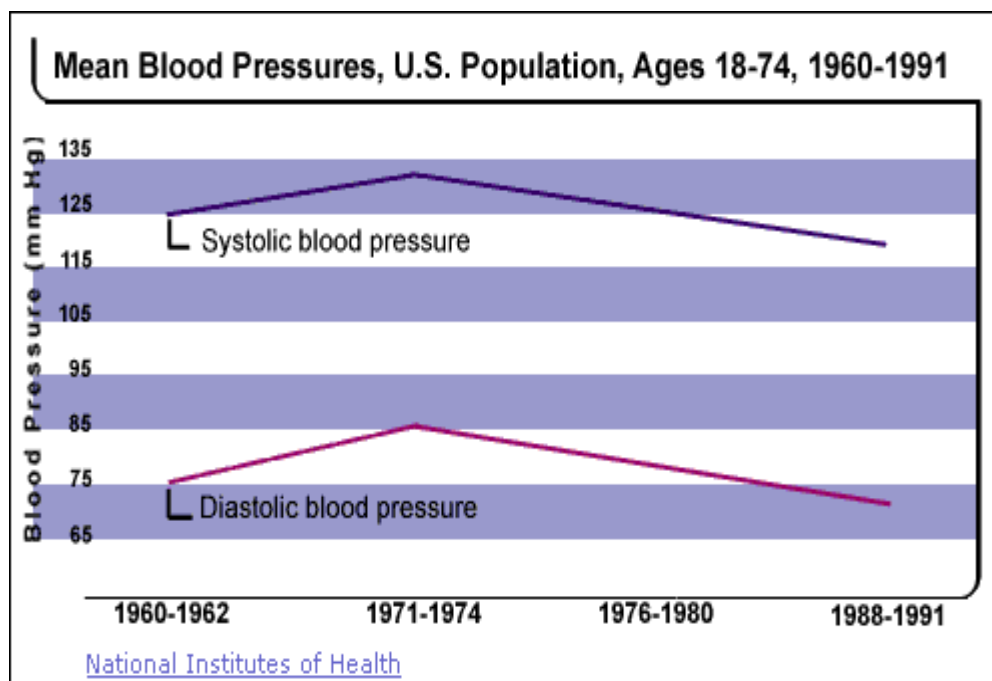
Because there aren't any symptoms, hypertension can only be detected by measuring blood pressure - in your doctor's office, at a CSI Managed Health System at your workplace, in pharmacies and other retail settings, or with a home blood pressure monitor.

Fortunately, high blood pressure is usually controllable. Changes in eating and exercise habits can significantly lower blood pressure, and there are also many antihypertensive medications that work alone or in combination to keep blood pressure under control.

Nearly a third of people who have high blood pressure don't even know it - which is why it's a good idea to measure blood pressure on a regular basis. Of those people who have been diagnosed and are receiving treatment, only 40% are receiving the right treatment and have their blood pressure under control. A similar number are receiving inadequate treatment, and the rest are not receiving treatment at all.

It has been repeatedly shown in clinical trials that reducing blood pressure decreases deaths from stroke, coronary events, and heart failure; slows the progression of kidney disease; prevents progression to more severe hypertension; and reduces mortality overall.

If you're an adult whose blood pressure is above 140/90 mm Hg, you probably share some characteristics with the millions who are in the same situation. You may enjoy eating foods that taste great but are high in calories, fat, and cholesterol. You may be sedentary, exercising fewer than three times a week, and you may weigh more than the recommended level. If you also smoke, your risk is significantly increased. Making positive lifestyle changes can greatly help manage blood pressure problems.



Blood Pressure Classification and Follow-Up*

| Category | Systolic | Diastolic | Follow-up |
|--|------------|------------|--|
| High blood pressure** Stage 3 | ≥ 180 | ≥ 110 | See your healthcare provider immediately. |
| High blood pressure** Stage 2 | 160-179 | 100-109 | See your healthcare provider within a month. |
| High blood pressure** Stage 1 | 140-159 | 90-99 | Confirm within 2 months. |
| High-normal | 130-139 | 85-89 | Recheck in 1 year. |
| Normal | < 130 | < 85 | Recheck in 2 years. |
| Optimal | < 120 | < 80 | Recheck in 2 years. |

*Healthy lifestyle is advised for people in all categories. Recommendations for follow-up are for people who aren't taking antihypertensive drugs and aren't ill. If you have high blood pressure or other health conditions, consult your healthcare provider.

**Based on the average of two or more readings taken at each of two or more visits after an initial screening.

Sources:

- American Heart Association. *High blood pressure statistics. 2000.*
- American Heart Association. *Biostatistical Fact Sheet - High Blood Pressure. 2001.*
- Margolis S, Appel L, Wityk RJ. *Hypertension and Stroke. The Johns Hopkins White Papers 2001.*
- NIH. *The Sixth Report of the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure. Nov. 1997.*