



Here is a fact about high blood pressure that you can share.

Fact: *High blood pressure is the second leading cause of kidney disease.*

What is high blood pressure?

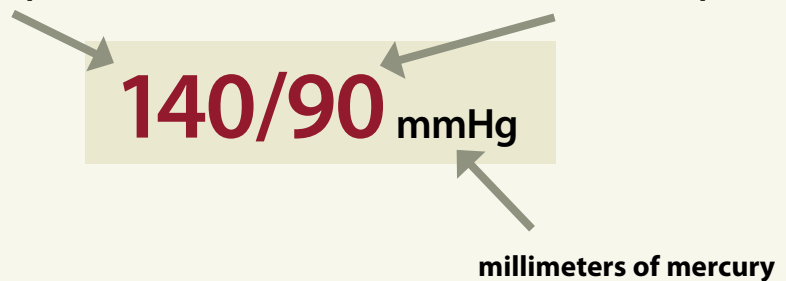
Blood pressure is the force of blood against the walls of your arteries as it is pumped through your body. When this force stays too high, it becomes a life-threatening condition called hypertension, or high blood pressure. It makes the heart work too hard, causing damage to blood vessels, and can lead to serious health problems like heart disease, stroke, and kidney failure.

A blood pressure of 140/90 mmHg or higher is considered high for most people. In general, lower is better. However, very low blood pressure can sometimes be a cause of concern and should be checked out by a doctor.

High Blood Pressure

The pressure of blood in the vessels when the heart beats: **systolic pressure**

The pressure between beats when the heart relaxes: **diastolic pressure**



Am I at risk for high blood pressure?

Anyone can develop high blood pressure. But there are several factors that increase your risk:

- Being overweight or obese
- Not exercising
- Eating too much salt and sodium
- Not eating enough potassium (found in fruits and vegetables)
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Having diabetes

How do I know if I have high blood pressure?

High blood pressure is often called “the silent killer” because it usually has no symptoms. Some people may not find out they have it until they have complications that affect their heart, brain, or kidneys.

The only way to find out if you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure checked regularly by your doctor or health care provider. Most doctors will check your blood pressure several times on different days to get repeated readings before deciding whether you have high blood pressure.

How can I control or prevent high blood pressure?

High blood pressure can be treated and controlled. Many different types of medicines lower blood pressure. Two types—called ACE inhibitors and ARBs—also protect kidney function. Better yet, high blood pressure can be prevented.

Simple and often small lifestyle changes can help control and prevent high blood pressure:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Be physically active
- Follow a healthy eating plan
- Reduce salt and sodium in your diet
- Drink alcohol only in moderation
- Quit smoking
- Control your blood sugar if you have diabetes
- Take prescribed medicine as directed

For More Information

Contact the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) at 1-301-592-8573 or www.nhlbi.nih.gov, or visit the International Society on Hypertension in Blacks (ISHIB) website at www.ishib.org.