

# Blood Pressure



## High Blood Pressure “The Silent Killer”

### Did you know...

In almost all cases high blood pressure has no symptoms or warning signs which is why it's referred to as the “silent killer”. High blood pressure is the 3rd leading cause of death in Canada and the #1 cause of heart disease and stroke.



### Be Aware That...

High blood pressure can cause damage to the blood vessels in your body. This can result in:

- stroke
- heart attack
- heart damage
- kidney damage
- eye damage
- decreased thinking abilities or dementia



The good news is that **blood pressure can be controlled**



## Preventing and Lowering High Blood Pressure

Most people with high blood pressure require a combination of medication **and** lifestyle changes to reach their recommended blood pressure goals. There are things **you** can do to control blood pressure:

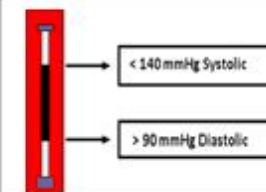
CAUTION		GO
Lack of Physical Activity		Get regular physical activity: 30 to 60 minutes of moderate activity most days of the week such as walking or any physical activity that is enjoyable.
Body Weight		Maintain a healthy weight. If overweight, losing about 10lb or 5kg will lower blood pressure by about 7mmHg systolic and 6mmHg diastolic.
Waist Circumference		Less than 102 cm for men Less than 88 cm for women
Food Choices		Eat healthy Follow Canada's Food Guide
Salt (Sodium) Intake		Reduce daily sodium intake to 2000 mg or less (approximately 1 teaspoon of salt). Buy products that are labelled with less than or equal to 5% daily value of sodium.
Alcohol		Men: Limit alcohol intake to 0-3 standard drinks per day & do not exceed 15 drinks per week. Women: Limit alcohol intake to 0-2 standard drinks per day & do not exceed 10 drinks per week.
Smoking		Stop smoking and avoid second hand smoke.
Medications		Take all medications as prescribed.
Stress		Reduce stress and find healthy ways to cope with the stress that can't be avoided.
Blood Pressure Readings		Have your blood pressure taken regularly and as directed by your health care provider.

Adapted from CHEP 2015



Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries. There are two numbers used to measure blood pressure. The higher number or **systolic pressure** is the pressure when the heart contracts. The lower number or **diastolic pressure** is the pressure when the heart is relaxed.

### Target Blood Pressure Levels



Less than 140/90\*\*

\*\* For people measuring their blood pressure at home, goal would be less than 135/85

People with diabetes

Less than 130/80

People age 80 years or greater

Systolic less than 150 mmHg

High blood pressure is also known as hypertension. It means that your blood pressure is above the normal range.

The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to have your **blood pressure taken regularly and as directed by your health care provider**. It is important to measure blood pressure accurately.

### Tips for Taking Blood Pressure

#### DON'T

- Have clothing under the blood pressure cuff
- Wear tight clothing
- Talk or watch TV while blood pressure is being taken
- Take blood pressure if upset or in pain
- Take blood pressure when physically active

#### DO

- Rest for 5 minutes before taking blood pressure
- Sit with feet flat on floor and legs uncrossed or lie down
- Be in a quiet place
- Take the blood pressure on the same arm each time
- Restrict caffeine and smoking for 30 minutes before taking blood pressure
- Keep arm level with heart and have palm facing up
- When taking blood pressure at home, make sure you use proper equipment recommended by the Canadian Hypertension Society. Look for this logo on the box.



**STROKE NETWORK**  
of Southeastern Ontario