

## What is high blood pressure?

High blood pressure is also called hypertension. This is a health problem that happens when blood moves through your blood vessels with too much force.

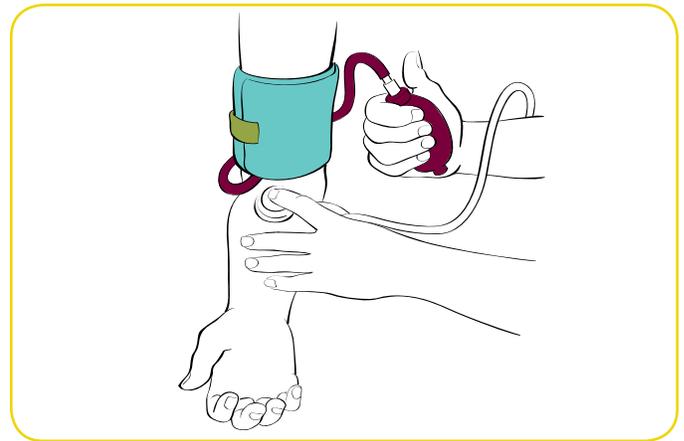
If your blood pressure is high, your heart has to work harder. High blood pressure can damage your heart. It can also raise your risk of a heart attack or stroke.

Blood pressure is measured in 2 ways:

1. **Systolic blood pressure:** This is the pressure in the arteries when the heart pumps out blood.
2. **Diastolic blood pressure:** This is the pressure in the arteries when the heart relaxes between beats.

A blood pressure test gives you 2 numbers:

1. The number on top is the systolic pressure.
2. The number on the bottom is the diastolic pressure.



### TIP

Ask your health care provider if you are at risk of cardiovascular disease.

Continued from other side

## How a healthy heart works

With each beat, your heart picks up oxygen-rich blood from your lungs. Then your heart pumps it through your blood vessels to the other parts of your body. The measure of your heartbeat is called a heart rate.

Your health care provider measures your heart rate when you are resting. Adults have a normal resting heart rate between 60 and 100 beats a minute.

### What are blood vessels?

There are 2 types of blood vessels:

1. The blood vessels that bring blood from your body **to** the heart are called veins.
2. The blood vessels that take blood **from** the heart to your body are called arteries.



### TIP

Your health care provider can help you lower your risk of having problems with your heart or blood vessels. Talk to your health care provider about your risk.

Healthy blood vessels are soft and flexible. But if plaque builds up in your arteries, they can become stiff. This can make it harder for blood to flow through them.