

## > What is hypertension?

Hypertension is another word for high blood pressure. In the UK, more than 1 in 4 adults have high blood pressure. Many people are unaware that their blood pressure is too high because hypertension rarely has noticeable symptoms.

## > How is blood pressure measured?

Blood pressure is recorded with two numbers. The higher number measures the force at which your heart pumps blood around your body and is known as systolic pressure.

The lower number is the resistance to blood flow in the blood vessels known as diastolic pressure. Both are measured in millimetres of mercury (mmHg)

## > What are the risks of high blood pressure?

Having high blood pressure puts a strain on your blood vessels, heart and other organs such as your brain, kidneys and eyes.

High blood pressure can also increase your risk of serious and potentially life-threatening conditions such as heart disease, heart failure, stroke, kidney disease and vascular dementia. However, reducing your blood pressure by even small amount can help lower your risk of having these conditions.

## > What causes high blood pressure?

It is not always clear what causes high blood pressure but you are more likely to have high blood pressure if you:

- Eat too much salt and don't eat enough fruit and vegetables
- Don't do enough exercise
- Drink too much alcohol or coffee (or other caffeine-based drinks)
- Smoke
- Don't get much sleep or have disturbed sleep
- Are over the age of 65
- Are overweight

## > What can I do to reduce my blood pressure?

Making healthy lifestyle changes can help lower your blood pressure. You can:

- Eat less salt ( Limit your salt intake to 6g/day)
- Eat a balanced, healthy diet
- Maintain a normal healthy weight
- Be physically active
- Cut down on alcohol
- Drink fewer caffeine based drinks
- Stop smoking
- Try to get a good night's sleep

## > What about my medicines?

Taking your prescribed medicine properly will also help lower your blood pressure. It is estimated that between 50 and 80 % of patients do not take their medication. Do not stop taking your medication unless your GP tells you to.

### Get your blood pressure checked and know your numbers

- Normal Blood pressure is between 120/80 mmHg or less
- High blood pressure is 140/90mmHg or higher
- Low blood pressure is considered to be 90/60mmHg or lower

### Blood pressure checks

You can check your blood pressure yourself with a home blood pressure monitor. Ask your local pharmacist for more information. If you don't feel comfortable checking your blood pressure yourself, you can get your blood pressure checked:

- At some pharmacies
- As part of your NHS Health Check
- In some workplaces
- At your GP surgery

### Do you know that you can also have low pressure?

Low blood pressure is a measurement of 90/60mmHg or lower

Get your blood pressure checked if you keep getting symptoms like:

- Light headedness or dizziness, Fainting
- Blurred vision
- Feeling sick
- Confusion
- Generally feeling weak

See your GP if you have low blood pressure or call NHS 111 if you cannot get through to your GP.

**References:**NHS choices: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/high-blood-pressure-hypertension/>  
Public Health England: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-combating-high-blood-pressure/health-matters-combating-high-blood-pressure>

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To contact Bromley Well call the Single Point of Access on **0808 278 7898** or direct Lifestyle Support lines **07985 431484 / 07985 444210** Email [enquiry@bromleywell.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@bromleywell.org.uk) [www.bromleywell.org.uk](http://www.bromleywell.org.uk)

**> Further resources and services**[British Heart Foundation](#)

Heart Helpline  
0808 802 1234  
0300 330 3311

A national charity providing information and advice for the public and for health professionals. A really useful site containing lifestyle advice, the latest research and information about tests and treatments.

[Heart Support Group Directory](#)

Link to website page where you can search for local support.

[Blood Pressure UK](#)

Helpline 0207 882 6218

National charity providing information about how to check your blood pressure and what the results mean and advice about lifestyle changes and medication. Online forum available.

[NHS Live Well](#)

NHS Live Well pages have information on topics such as maintaining a healthy weight, sleeping well, drinking sensibly and looking after your mental and emotional wellbeing.

[NHS Approved Apps Healthy Living](#)

Links to NHS approved Apps designed to support you in making healthy lifestyle changes.

[BDA Fact Sheet Hypertension](#)

The Association of UK Dietitians fact sheets containing diet advice for people living with hypertension and tips for managing the condition.