

Blood Pressure

What is the connection between diabetes and blood pressure?

High blood pressure can make the complications of diabetes much worse than they would be otherwise, and put you at even higher risk of heart disease, eye disease, and kidney disease.

Controlling blood pressure can reduce the risk of eye, kidney, and nerve disease by approximately 33%, and the risk of heart disease and stroke (cardiovascular disease) by approximately 30% to 50%. Healthy eating, medications, and physical activity can help you bring high blood pressure down.



Pavel Danilyuk (photographer). Measuring Blood Pressure. [Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.pexels.com/photo/a-healthcare-worker-measuring-a-patient-s-blood-pressure-using-a-sphygmomanometer-7108344/](http://www.pexels.com/photo/a-healthcare-worker-measuring-a-patient-s-blood-pressure-using-a-sphygmomanometer-7108344/)

Understanding the numbers

Blood pressure is the force of blood flow inside your blood vessels. Your healthcare provider records your blood pressure as two numbers, such as 120/80, which you may hear them say as "120 over 80." Both numbers are important. The first number is the pressure as your heart beats and pushes blood through the blood vessels, also known as "systolic" pressure. The second number is the pressure when the vessels relax between heartbeats. This is called "diastolic" pressure.

A good blood pressure is	Pre-hypertension is	High blood pressure or hypertension is
<u>120</u> or LOWER 80 or LOWER	<u>120-139</u> 80-89	<u>140</u> or HIGHER 90 or HIGHER

How to check blood pressure

Checking blood pressure at home can be a helpful way to detect blood pressure problems quickly.

Frequency. You should take your blood pressure (BP) as often as your health care provider instructs and at the same approximate time each day—for example, morning or evening.

Preparing. Wait at least a half hour after smoking, drinking alcohol or caffeinated beverages, eating or exercising because these things can affect your BP. Empty your bladder because a full bladder can raise your BP, and then wait 5 – 10 minutes before you take the reading.

Sit comfortably at a table. Place your monitor on the table. Be still. Do not talk while you are taking your BP. Sit straight with your back supported, both feet flat on the floor, and do not cross your legs or ankles.

Technique. Place the BP cuff around your upper bare arm, unless otherwise directed by your health care provider. Wrap cuff to a tightness that allows you to be able to insert 1-2 fingers in the top. Place tubing directly in the middle of the inside of your elbow. Place your arm on the table at heart level (NOT above heart level). Rest your hand palm up.

Press the start button. Wait until machine is completely finished. If one arm measures a higher blood pressure than the other, use the arm which gives higher readings.



Mikhail Nilov (photographer). Sphygmomanometer. [Digital image]. Retrieved from <http://www.pexels.com/photo/a-sphygmomanometer-up-close-8670204/>

Note: If you have a ‘pre-fitted’ cuff and can fit more than 2 fingers in your cuff and/or you can pull your ‘pre-fitted’ cuff up and down your arm, call your healthcare team to ask about getting your cuff refitted. A poor fit will result in inaccurate BP readings.

Writing down your results. Include the date and time in your BP log book. If you get a reading that seems too high or too low for you, rest for 15 minutes. Then check it again.

Bringing your results to your medical visit.

Bring your BP record to all your medical visits. When coming to your medical visits, take your blood pressure medicines as usual, even if you are fasting for a blood test. That way your health care provider can measure your blood pressure with your usual medications in your system.



Ylanite Koppens (photographer). Silver Pen. [Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.pexels.com/photo/person-holding-silver-retractable-pen-in-white-ruled-book-796603/](http://www.pexels.com/photo/person-holding-silver-retractable-pen-in-white-ruled-book-796603/)

Sample Log of Home Blood Pressure Readings

Date	Time	Top Number	Bottom Number	Heart Rate	Comments
4/28/15	9:00 am	118	88	72	
4/29/15	9:30 am	140	95	79	<i>Stressed about my presentation at work today</i>

Trouble using the blood pressure monitor:

If you are having trouble getting a reading from your BP monitor, or the readings don't seem accurate, you can call the toll free number on the back of your meter, or contact your primary care team. If your meter is giving you an error message or not working properly, sometimes replacing the battery will help.

High Blood Pressure

It is normal for blood pressure to go up and down somewhat during the day.

Ask your primary care team what your goal blood pressure is.

- ◆ If you continue to have BP readings that are above your goal, either on the top or on the bottom, contact your primary care team.
- ◆ If you are taking medications for blood pressure, your healthcare team may recommend that you check your blood pressure regularly. If your blood pressure is high, you may not feel symptoms, so using your monitor is one way to keep track of whether your blood pressure is controlled.
- ◆ Occasional high blood pressure levels can be caused by taking blood pressure medicine differently than usual, being sick or under stress, or taking over the counter medicines that raise blood pressure. For some people, eating salty food or drinking alcohol raises their blood pressure.



cottonbro (photographer). Measuring Her Own Blood Pressure. [Digital image]. Retrieved from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-healthcare-worker-measuring-her-own-blood-pressure-using-a-sphygmomanometer-5721671/>

When should I be concerned enough to seek urgent medical care?

- ◆ If your top number is over 180, and does not come down after relaxing
- ◆ If your bottom number is over 100 and does not come down after relaxing
- ◆ Any unusual blood pressure results or any symptoms of heart strain or stroke (for example, if you have: chest pain or pressure; shortness of breath; weakness on one side; sudden trouble seeing, speaking or understanding; or a sudden, severe headache)

Low blood pressure

Low blood pressure, also known as “hypotension,” can make you feel tired, dizzy, or cause you to fall down and hurt yourself.



Engin Akyurt (photographer). Heart [Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.pexels.com/photo/macro-shot-of-heart-shaped-cut-out-1820511/](https://www.pexels.com/photo/macro-shot-of-heart-shaped-cut-out-1820511/)

- ◆ If you ever have symptoms of low blood pressure, such as lightheadedness or dizziness, try to check your blood pressure while you are having the symptoms.
- ◆ Common reasons for having an occasional low blood pressure are eating or drinking less than usual, being dehydrated from heat or illness, or changes in how you are taking your blood pressure medications.

When your blood pressure is low, try sitting or lying down, and drinking a full glass of water. If you suffer from low blood pressure when standing for long periods, be sure to take a break to sit down.

- ◆ If your blood pressure is low more than twice, contact your primary care team to see if your medications need to be adjusted.
- ◆ You can use a blood pressure log to help you and your team figure out if anything in your routine led to a low blood pressure. Start by writing on your blood pressure log the time of day and your activity when you had the low blood pressure.
- ◆ Even if you are not having any symptoms from low blood pressure, continue tracking your readings, so you can contact your primary care team if the readings continue to seem low on a regular basis.



tapanakorn (photographer). Doctor Talks with Man. [Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.canva.com/media/MAEmKOSUeKA](https://www.canva.com/media/MAEmKOSUeKA)