

# Managing Blood Pressure

## For Birthing People and People Who May Get Pregnant

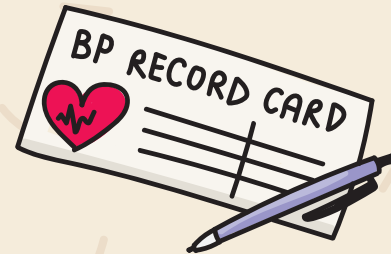


Hypertension, or **high blood pressure**, is when your heart has to work harder than it should to make sure that all the parts of your body get the blood they need to function.

High blood pressure usually does not cause symptoms but can cause serious health problems. Controlling your blood pressure before, during, and after pregnancy can help keep you and your baby healthy.

### Ways to Reduce Risk

- Eat a healthy, low salt diet
- Limit alcohol intake
- Stay active
- Manage stress
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Quit smoking
- Take prescribed medications



### Urgent Warning Signs



During pregnancy, high blood pressure can lead to complications and to your baby being born too small or too soon. If you are experiencing any of the following signs, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency department.

- Headache that does not go away
- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Extreme swelling of your hands or face
- Severe swelling, redness or pain of your leg or arm
- Severe nausea and throwing up (not like morning sickness)
- Severe belly pain that does not go away
- Baby's movements stopping or slowing during pregnancy
- Vaginal bleeding or fluid leaking during or after pregnancy



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and American Heart Association

**Previous Hypertension Diagnosis**

### Blood Pressure Record Card

Blood Pressure Measurement	Date	Referred to Medical Care?	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary
		<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary
		<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary
		<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary
		<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary
		<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary



Bring this card with you to doctor's appointments

# Guide for Speaking to Your Provider

One of the best ways to manage your blood pressure is to make a plan with your provider. Here are tips for making the most of your time together.



## Before Your Appointment

Note down all medications you are taking for hypertension and any other condition, including over the counter, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Write down how often you take them.

## During Your Appointment

### Getting the Conversation Started

- “I have been having \_\_\_\_ (insert symptoms) that feel like \_\_\_\_ (give detailed description). My symptoms have been lasting \_\_\_\_ (number of hours/days/months).”
- “I know my body well and this doesn’t feel normal.”

### Points to Bring Up

- If you are pregnant or just had a baby
- How often you check your blood pressure
- Any recorded blood pressure reading, especially any that have been high
- Any challenges you are facing related to your blood pressure

### Questions to Ask

- What could my symptoms mean?
- Are there any tests to rule out serious problems?
- When should I go to the emergency room or call 911?
- What do my blood pressure numbers mean for me?
- How often should I check my blood pressure?
- Can we schedule a follow-up appointment?

 **More for Healthy Babies**  
Every baby counts on you



Normal	Elevated	Stage 1 Hypertension	Stage 2 Hypertension	Hypertensive Crisis
Systolic: Less than 120 Diastolic: Less than 80	Systolic: 120-129 Diastolic: Less than 80	Systolic: 130-139 Diastolic: 80-89	Systolic: 140 or more Diastolic: 90 or more	Systolic: 180 or more Diastolic: 120 or more
Repeat measurement in 1 year	Repeat measurement in 3 months	See healthcare provider within 1 month	Go to the emergency department	Go to the emergency department

*Systolic Blood pressure is always the highest number and always comes first.  
Diastolic appears second and is the lower number  
Both measurements are in mmHg*