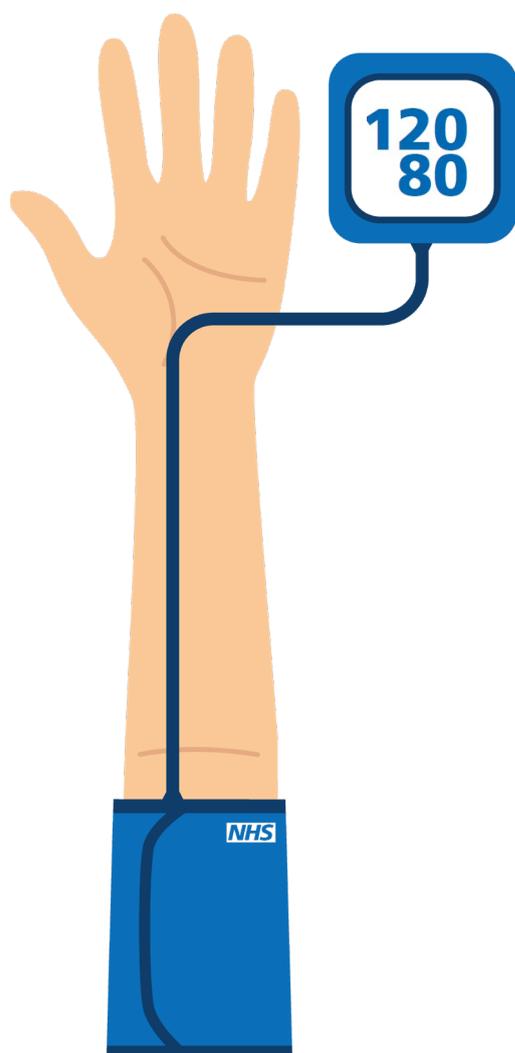


About blood pressure and what the numbers mean



Easy read booklet

Who we are and what this booklet is about



We are NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board.



This booklet tells you

- what blood pressure is.
- why you need to know if you have high blood pressure.
- things that can make your blood pressure high.
- how blood pressure is measured.
- how to test your blood pressure at home.
- what the blood pressure machine can tell you.
- what you can do to make your blood pressure lower.
- ways to make healthy choices.
- what to do with the numbers the blood pressure machine tells you.



Why you need to know if your blood pressure is high



Blood pressure is the pressure of the blood moving around your body.



If your blood pressure is too high then you are more likely to have a heart attack or a stroke.



You might not know if you have high blood pressure because you will not feel any different.



The only way to find out is to check your blood pressure regularly.

What can make blood pressure high



Doctors don't know why some people have high blood pressure but there are some things that might make it more likely.

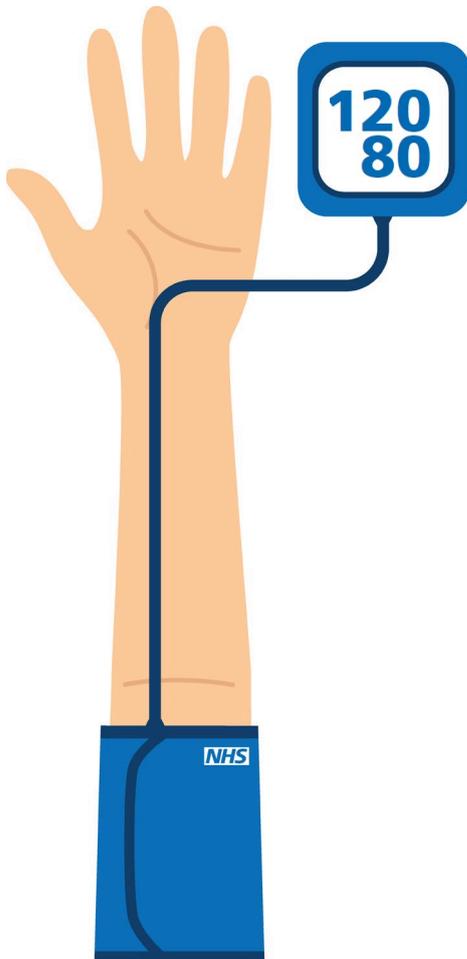


You are more likely to have high blood pressure if

- other people in your family have high blood pressure.
- you are from an African, Caribbean or South Asian background.
- you are older.
- you are overweight.
- you eat a lot of salt.
- you drink a lot of alcohol.



How blood pressure is measured



Blood pressure is measured using 2 numbers.

The 1st number is a bigger number and tells you how high your blood pressure is when your heart beats. This is called the **Systolic pressure**.

The 2nd number is a smaller number and tells you how high your blood pressure is when your heart is between beats. This is called the **Diastolic pressure**.



When they tell you your blood pressure they will say something like “120 over 80” but with the right numbers for you.

They write the 2 numbers down like this **120/80mmHg**.

How to test your blood pressure at home



High blood pressure can only be **diagnosed** by a doctor.

Diagnosed means that a doctor has looked at tests that show you have a health problem.



You can test your blood pressure at home. You will need to buy a home blood pressure monitor.



There are lots of different types of monitors, so you might want to look at different ones, and check these have been tested properly and are correct.



Go to **www.bloodpressureuk.org** for more information about checking your blood pressure at home.



When you test your blood pressure at home you should

- test it before you eat, take any medicine or do any exercise.
- make sure you don't need to go to the toilet.
- not drink coffee or tea for 30 minutes before you do the test.
- not smoke for 30 minutes before you do the test.
- make sure you are comfortable and not stressed.
- sit quietly for 5 minutes before you start the test.
- sit with your feet on the ground and your back and arms in a relaxed position.
- use a **cuff** that fits on your arm properly. The **cuff** is like an armband that is part of the blood pressure machine.
- make sure the cuff is level with your heart.
- make sure you use a machine which has been checked to make sure it gives you the right information.



When you first start to test your blood pressure at home you should try the machine on both arms.



Use the arm which gives the biggest numbers.



Test your blood pressure twice a day, once in the morning and once at night.



Take 2 readings each time, 1 minute apart.



Test your blood pressure at the same time every day.

What the blood pressure machine readings can tell you



You have low blood pressure

If either number is less than 90/60mmHg it is called **low blood pressure**. This might be normal for you but if you feel dizzy or sick you should speak to your doctor.



You have problems with your pulse

Some blood pressure monitors also tell you about your **pulse**.

Your **pulse** is where you can feel your heartbeat through your skin.



If your pulse is too fast (above 100) or too slow (below 50), speak to your doctor about this.



If you can't get any numbers on your monitor

You should get your blood pressure checked by your doctor or by a **pharmacist**.



A **pharmacist** is someone who makes or sells medicine. They are also called a chemist.

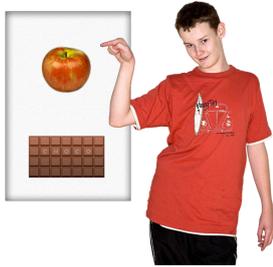
How you can make your blood pressure lower



There are lots of things you can do to make your blood pressure lower. Some things are

- eat more fruit and vegetables.
- do more exercise.
- take any medicine your doctor tells you to.
- drink less alcohol.
- lose weight if your doctor tells you to.
- don't add extra salt to your food.

How to make healthy choices



Making small, healthy choices can also help lower your blood pressure. You can do things like

- eat fruit, unsalted nuts or plain popcorn as a snack instead of crisps or chocolate.
- put pepper and spices on your food instead of salt.
- use the stairs instead of the lift.
- walk a little bit faster.
- stop smoking.

What blood pressure numbers mean

$$\frac{140}{90}$$


140/90 or if either is higher

Your blood pressure is too high. Speak to your doctor and get it checked again.

$$\frac{130}{85}$$

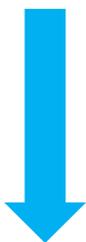

Between 130/85 and 139/89

Your blood pressure is a little bit high. You should make healthy choices to lower it and check it again in 1 year.

$$\frac{90}{60} \quad \frac{130}{85}$$


Between 90/60 and 129/84

Your blood pressure is healthy. Get it checked every 5 years.

$$\frac{90}{60}$$


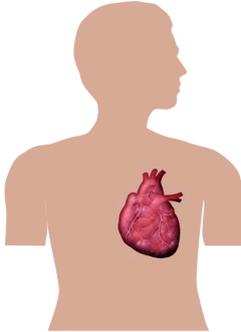
If either is lower than 90/60

Your blood pressure is low. Speak to your doctor about what this means.



If your blood pressure machine tells you about your pulse it might also tell you

Your heartbeat is irregular



Irregular means that your heart is not beating in a normal pattern.

If your heartbeat is irregular speak to your doctor as soon as you can.



If you have pain in your chest or you cannot breathe you should call 999.



Your heartbeat is too slow or too fast

If your heartbeat is too slow it could make you feel dizzy or sick.



If it is too fast it might make it hard to breathe.

Speak to your doctor if you are worried about this.

My blood pressure numbers



Use this page and the next page to write down your blood pressure the next time it is checked.

Date of check

The numbers are

My pulse rate is

Date of check

The numbers are

My pulse rate is

Date of check

The numbers are

My pulse rate is

Date of check

The numbers are

My pulse rate is

Date of check

The numbers are

My pulse rate is

Date of check

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Where to get more information about blood pressure



You can find out more information at these websites. You can point your mobile phone or tablet camera at the QR codes and click on the link or to the website



Our website
www.lancashireandsouthcumbria.icb.nhs.uk



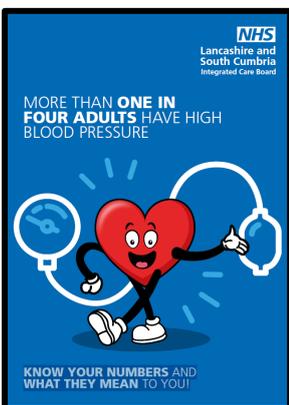
The NHS website.
Or go to **www.nhs.uk**



The British Heart Foundation website.
Or go to **www.bhf.org.uk**



The Healthier Lancashire and South Cumbria website.
Or go to **www.healthierlsc.co.uk/healthyhearts/resources**



The full version of this document is called “Know your numbers and what they mean to you”