

*If I have high blood pressure, what can I do to help control it?*

- Stay active. Get 30 minutes of exercise at least three days a week. Check with your doctor to determine the right exercise plan for you.
- Eat healthy. Avoid foods that are high in salt, fat and sugar. Add more fruits, vegetables and whole grains to your meals.
- Manage stress. Learn to relax and cope with your stress.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Ask your doctor what a healthy weight is for you.
- Quit smoking.
- Cut down on drinking alcohol.
- Ask your doctor how to better manage your high blood pressure. Follow your doctor's treatment plan.



*For more health education information*

**Medi-Cal Program members:**  
 Call the Health Education Information Line at **1-800-804-6074 (TTY/TDD 1-800-431-0964)**.

[www.CalVivaHealth.org](http://www.CalVivaHealth.org)

# High Blood Pressure

*What you need to know*



This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Please always follow your health care provider's instructions. Programs and services are subject to change.

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### What is high blood pressure?

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, means that the heart has to pump harder than it should to get blood to all parts of the body. Blood pressure is the force of the blood pushing against the walls of the blood vessel. When high blood pressure is not controlled, it may cause a heart attack, stroke or even death.



### Blood pressure levels

Systolic (mmHg)	Diastolic (mmHg)	Result
Less than 120	Less than 80	<b>Normal</b>
120–139	80–89	<b>Prehypertension</b> Your blood pressure could be a problem. Eat more healthy foods and stay active.
140–159	90–99	<b>Stage 1 high blood pressure</b> Ask your doctor how to control it.
160 or higher	100 or higher	<b>Stage 2 high blood pressure</b> Talk to your doctor and get help.

### How do I know if I have high blood pressure?

Check your blood pressure level in the table above. Blood pressure numbers include systolic and diastolic pressures. Systolic blood pressure is the pressure when the heart beats while pumping blood. Diastolic blood pressure is the pressure when the heart is at rest between beats. You will see blood pressure numbers written with the systolic number above or before the diastolic number, such as 120/80.

The table shows normal numbers for adults. It also shows which numbers put you at greater risk for health problems. Blood pressure may change throughout the day, even in people who have normal blood pressure. But if your numbers stay above normal most of the time, you're at risk and need to take actions to control your blood pressure.

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