

blood pressure

why is my blood pressure important?

Blood pressure is the force of the blood against the walls of the arteries and veins created by the heart as it pumps blood to every part of the body. Our blood pressure rises and falls with every heartbeat.

When the heart contracts the blood pressure peaks, this is called systolic blood pressure - the top reading. Between the heart's contractions the pressure is at its lowest, this is called the diastolic pressure - the bottom reading. This figure is measured in millimetres of mercury (mmHg).

so, what if my blood pressure is higher than normal?

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is a condition in which the blood pressure is chronically elevated above optimal levels. The most up-to-date classifications of blood pressure are:

	Systolic (mmHg)		Diastolic (mmHg)
Optimal	<120	and	<80
Normal	<130	and	<85
Pre-hypertensive	130-139	or	85-89
Hypertensive	>140	or	>90

Hypertension is a silent killer. Many people are unaware they have elevated levels, which increase the risk of coronary heart disease up to four times that of someone with normal blood pressure, as well as increasing the risk of stroke and kidney failure. Pre-hypertension is also a major concern as you are twice as likely to suffer a heart attack or stroke compared to non-hypertensive people.

how do i know if i'm at risk?

Hypertension may be caused by being overweight, inactivity, a high fat or salt diet, too much alcohol, or stress. If any of these apply to you or your family, we recommend you get your blood pressure checked.

Your Doctor can give you some specific advice but the key to reducing your blood pressure is to increase your activity levels, maintain a healthy weight and watch your diet.

Increasing your activity levels, albeit marginally, will improve the health of your heart. However, maintaining a regular and structured exercise program will see blood pressure return to normal and you will feel healthier.

You only have one heart - so look after it!

further information:

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