

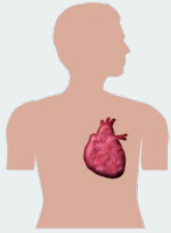


# Getting your blood pressure checked

**An easy read guide**

 made with photosymbols®

## What is blood pressure?



Your heart pumps blood around your body.

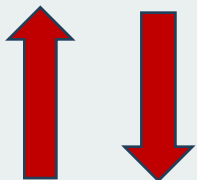


Your blood pressure tells us if your heart is doing a good job.



We can check your blood pressure with a machine called a blood pressure monitor.

## Why is it important to check your blood pressure?



It is **normal** for your blood pressure to change at different times of day. It goes up and down as you move around.



It is **normal** to have high blood pressure when you are doing exercise or if you are excited.



If your blood pressure is **high all the time** this can be bad for your health.

## Why is high blood pressure a problem?



High blood pressure means your heart has to work harder to pump blood around your body.



If your blood pressure is **high** all the time this can make you unwell.



If your blood pressure is **very high**, you can be at risk of:

- a heart attack or a stroke
- other illnesses like kidney disease or dementia



You might not be able to tell if you have high blood pressure.



You might not feel any different than usual. So it is important to get your blood pressure checked.

## Why do people get high blood pressure?



We don't always know why people get high blood pressure



But some of the reasons are:

- you are more likely to have high blood pressure if other people in your family do



- Afro-Caribbean and South Asian people are more likely to have high blood pressure



- blood pressure goes up when you get older



- eating fatty and sugary food and drinking alcohol can make your blood pressure high



- being overweight or not doing exercise can also make your blood pressure high

## How can I improve my blood pressure?



You can improve your blood pressure with a healthy lifestyle.



Small changes can make a big difference to your health.



These are things that can help improve your blood pressure:

- **eat a healthy diet**



- **do some exercise**



- **give up smoking**



You can get help with healthy living from your local health and wellbeing service.



Some people need to take medicine to treat high blood pressure. This is prescribed by a doctor.

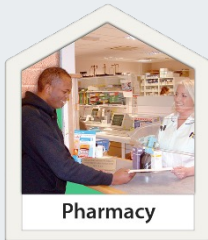


It is important to know if you have high blood pressure so that you can look after yourself properly.

## Getting your blood pressure checked



You can get your blood pressure checked at your **doctor's surgery**.



Or a **community pharmacy**.

## Can I check my own blood pressure?



Some people buy a blood pressure monitor. This means they can check their blood pressure **at home**.

Some people need support to do this.



When you check your blood pressure at home it is important that you do these things:



- use a blood pressure monitor that has an arm band
- make sure you are sitting up straight with your feet flat on the ground



- **do not** drink coffee, smoke, exercise or eat for half an hour before



- **do not** measure your blood pressure if you are stressed or upset

## How does it work?

Normal

Less than

124  
79

When you check your blood pressure the monitor will show two numbers.

These numbers tell you what your blood pressure is.



## What do the numbers mean?

### High side of normal

Between

$\frac{125}{80}$	$\frac{134}{84}$
------------------	------------------

The numbers tell you if your blood pressure is normal or high.

Doing exercise, getting stressed or excited can make blood pressure high.



If your blood pressure **stays** high, you should speak to your doctor.

## What if the numbers are high?

Also called hypertension

### High

Between

$\frac{135}{85}$	$\frac{165}{104}$
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If your numbers are **high**, you should make an appointment to see your doctor.

### Very high

Above

$\frac{170}{110}$
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If your numbers are **very high**:

- wait 5 minutes, then check your blood pressure again
- if it is still very high, get medical attention that day

## Get help if you are worried



If you are worried about your blood pressure you can visit your pharmacy, or contact your doctor.



British Heart  
Foundation

or you can call:

- British Heart Foundation helpline  
0300 330 3311



- NHS - call 111

## Local services:



To get help with healthy living and healthy blood pressure, you can contact your local health and wellbeing service:

**Brighton and Hove** - 01273 296 580  
[brighton-hove.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing](http://brighton-hove.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing)

**East Sussex** - 01323 404 600  
[oneyoueastsussex.org.uk](http://oneyoueastsussex.org.uk)

**West Sussex**  
[westsussexwellbeing.org.uk](http://westsussexwellbeing.org.uk)

- **Adur and Worthing** - 01903 221 450
- **Arun** - 01903 737 862
- **Chichester** - 01243 521 041
- **Crawley** - 01293 585 317
- **Horsham** - 01403 215 111
- **Mid-Sussex** - 01444 477 191

# For more information:

**Sussex Health and Care website has more information and short films for people with learning disabilities about looking after your heart:**

<http://www.sussex.ics.nhs.uk/support-for-people-with-a-learning-disability>

**For more information about blood pressure checks:**

<https://www.bloodpressureuk.org/media/bpuk/docs/Keep-your-blood-pressure-healthy---Easy-Read.pdf>

**Annual health checks:**

Watch these films to find out how to get an annual health check:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/learning-disabilities/improving-health/annual-health-checks/>

This is a film about how health actions plans are helping people to keep healthy and stay well:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ocU8XhD1kh8>

**Asking for reasonable adjustments:**

'Treat me well' is a Mencap film about asking for reasonable adjustments in hospital:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMV06K1oanA>

This easy read guide was made in partnership with

**Brighton and Hove Speakout**, who offer independent advocacy for adults with learning disabilities in Brighton and Hove:

<http://www.bhspeakout.org.uk>



**Sussex  
Health&Care**

