1. **UNDERSTAND READINGS**

The first step to managing blood pressure is to understand what the levels mean and what is considered normal, elevated, high blood pressure (hypertension) and hypertensive crisis. [heart.org/BPLevels](http://heart.org/BPLevels)

Blood pressure is typically recorded as two numbers: 117/76

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**Systolic**

The top number, the higher of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats (when the heart muscle contracts).

**Diastolic**

The bottom number, the lower of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart is resting between heart beats.

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### BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top number)</th>
<th>DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom number)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>less than 120 and less than 80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevated Blood Pressure</td>
<td>120 to 129 and less than 80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1</td>
<td>130 to 139 or 80 to 89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2</td>
<td>140 or higher or 90 or higher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertensive Crisis (Call your doctor immediately)</td>
<td>higher than 180 and/or higher than 120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2. **TRACK LEVELS**

Health care providers can take blood pressure readings and provide recommendations.

Check. Change. Control. helps you track your progress in reducing blood pressure.

Track online at [cccctracker.com/AHA](http://cccctracker.com/AHA)

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3. **TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

**EAT SMART**

Eat a healthy diet of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, legumes, nuts, plant-based proteins, lean animal proteins and fish. Limit sodium, saturated fats and added sugars. Limit sugary foods and drinks, fatty or processed meats, salty foods, refined carbohydrates and highly processed foods.

[heart.org/EatSmart](http://heart.org/EatSmart)

**MOVE MORE**

Physical activity helps control blood pressure, weight and stress levels.

[heart.org/MoveMore](http://heart.org/MoveMore)

**MANAGE WEIGHT**

If you're overweight, even a slight weight loss can reduce high blood pressure.

[heart.org/Weight](http://heart.org/Weight)

**DON'T SMOKE**

Every time you smoke, vape or use tobacco, the nicotine can cause a temporary increase in blood pressure.

[heart.org/Tobacco](http://heart.org/Tobacco)

**SLEEP WELL**

Short sleep (less than 6 hours) and poor-quality sleep are associated with high blood pressure.