1. **UNDERSTAND READINGS AND LEVELS**

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)

- **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.

**Blood pressure is typically recorded as two numbers, written as a ratio like this:**

```
117 / 76
```

Read as “117 over 76 millimeters of mercury.”

**THE AHA DEFINES THESE CATEGORIES AS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blood Pressure Category</th>
<th>Systolic mm Hg (upper #)</th>
<th>Diastolic mm Hg (lower #)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Less than 120</td>
<td>Less than 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevated Blood Pressure</td>
<td>120–129</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Blood Pressure</td>
<td>130–139</td>
<td>80–89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hypertension) Stage 1</td>
<td>140 or higher</td>
<td>90 or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Blood Pressure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hypertension) Stage 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertensive Crisis</td>
<td>Higher than 180</td>
<td>Higher than 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Emergency care needed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **LEARN AND TRACK LEVELS**

Medical providers can take blood pressure readings and provide recommendations.

Check. Change. Control helps track and manage progress in reducing blood pressure.

Track online with ccctracker.com/aha

3. **TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

**EAT SMART**

Follow a healthy eating pattern that emphasizes fruits and vegetables and includes whole grains, low-fat dairy, and healthy proteins and fats. Limit sugary foods and drinks, fatty or processed meats, salty foods, and highly processed foods. [heart.org/EatSmart](http://heart.org/EatSmart)

**GET ACTIVE**

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 prevent high blood pressure. [heart.org/LosingWeight](http://heart.org/LosingWeight)

**QUIT SMOKING**

Every time you smoke, it can cause a temporary increase in blood pressure. [heart.org/BeWell](http://heart.org/BeWell)

**LEARN THE SALTY SIX**

Limit the amount of sodium you’re eating each day. Learn the Salty Six — common foodsloaded with excess sodium.

- Cold Cuts & Cured Meats
- Pizza
- Soup
- Breads & Rolls
- Sandwiches
- Burritos & Tacos

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1. [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Encyclopedia/Heart-Encyclopedia_UCM_445084_Encyclopedia.jsp?title=systolic blood pressure](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Encyclopedia/Heart-Encyclopedia_UCM_445084_Encyclopedia.jsp?title=systolic blood pressure)
2. [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Encyclopedia/Heart-Encyclopedia_UCM_445084_Encyclopedia.jsp?title=diastolic blood pressure](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Encyclopedia/Heart-Encyclopedia_UCM_445084_Encyclopedia.jsp?title=diastolic blood pressure)
4. [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Encyclopedia/Heart-Encyclopedia_UCM_445084_Encyclopedia.jsp?title=DASH diet](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Encyclopedia/Heart-Encyclopedia_UCM_445084_Encyclopedia.jsp?title=DASH diet)