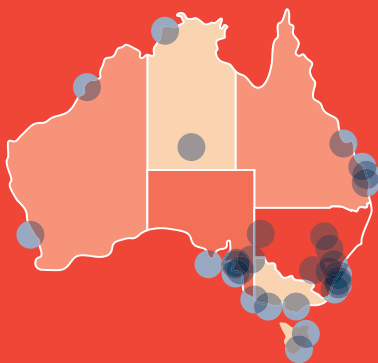
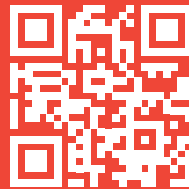


# Blood pressure & your heart health

Please scan the QR code to visit Heart Support Australia's website for additional information and access our online resources to further support your journey.



Being part of Heart Support Australia and sharing your lived experience benefits your heart health in many ways.

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 @heartsupportaustralia

 @heartsupportaus

 @heart-support-australia

Heart Support Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters, and community. We pay our respect to them and their cultures, and Elders past, present and future.



**KNOW YOUR NUMBERS  
TREAT YOUR RISK**

Help reduce the chances of a secondary heart event by knowing your numbers. Visit [www.knowyournumberstreatyourrisk.com.au](http://www.knowyournumberstreatyourrisk.com.au)

#### References

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2. ESC Guidelines on cardiovascular disease prevention in clinical practice *European Heart Journal* (2021) 42, 3227-3337. doi:10.1093/eurheartj/ehab484. Erratum in: *Eur Heart J*. 2022 Nov 7;43(42):4468. PMID: 34458905. 3. Guideline for the pharmacological treatment of hypertension in adults. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.
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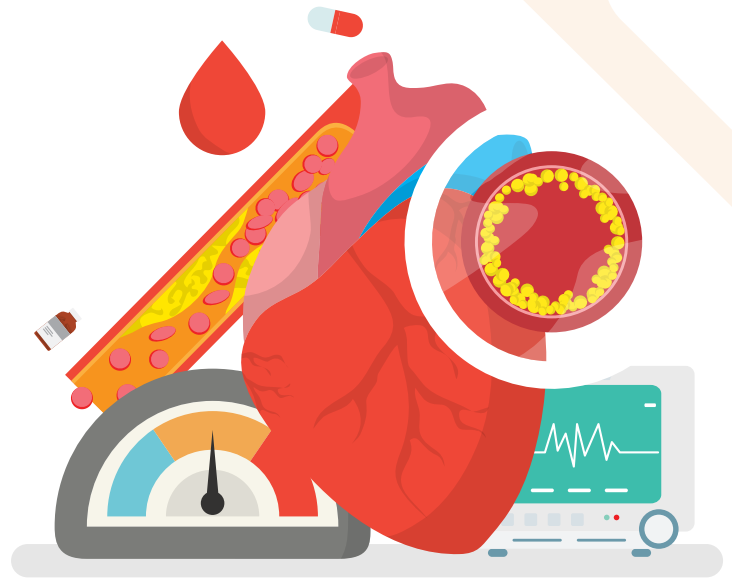
## What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure measures the force of blood pushing against your artery walls. You need a certain amount of pressure to move the blood around your body, to your heart, brain, and the rest of your body.

Blood pressure is measured with two numbers:

- The top number, systolic, is the pressure when the heart beats (the heart muscle contracts).
- The bottom number, diastolic, is the pressure when the heart rests or relaxes between beats.

The medical term for high blood pressure is hypertension, meaning your blood pressure is always too high.

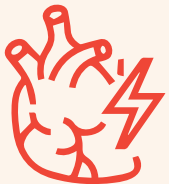


If the pressure is too high it causes damage to the elastic lining of the arteries.

- The lining of the artery loses its stretchiness and becomes stiff and narrow.
- The blood vessels cannot expand and contract easily.
- The narrowed arteries allow cholesterol deposits to build up and fatty plaque to form.
- This makes it easier for plaque that has formed to break through the artery wall.
- This tear or break in the artery lining may result in a clot blocking the affected artery.

## Why is it important to manage blood pressure?

If blood pressure is too high, it will damage all blood vessels and increase your risk of :



Heart attack



Kidney disease



Stroke



Heart failure



Atrial fibrillation



## Blood Pressure Treatment Options

### What you need to know

Treating high blood pressure reduces your chance of a heart attack or stroke. That's why it's essential that you Know your Number.

**Understand what is a "normal" blood pressure reading.  
Understand what number is normal/acceptable for you.**

Your doctor will tell you what your acceptable blood pressure is based on your medical history, family history and your lifestyle. Ask your GP what is acceptable for you.

**Following a heart attack International guidelines recommend this number should not be higher than 130/80mmhg.**

Several treatments are available to lower blood pressure. You may need to take two or more medications to reduce your blood pressure. There are many groups of medications which reduce blood pressure, your cardiologist will decide which are best for you.

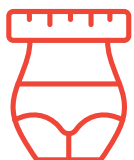
Blood pressure medications work to widen blood vessels and therefore reduce the pressure within them.

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## Healthy lifestyle practices reduce your blood pressure.



Stop smoking



Maintain a healthy weight



Exercise daily



Establish healthy eating



Manage stress



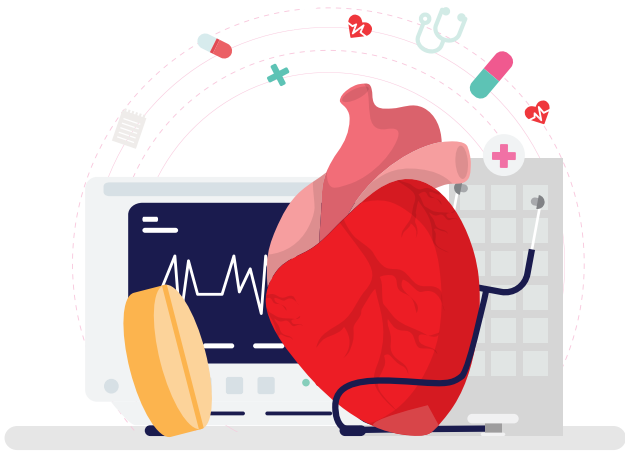
Manage sleep apnoea



Lessen alcohol intake

**Always take your medications as prescribed – see your doctor or pharmacist if you experience side effects.**

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## Understanding your blood pressure levels

- What is my current blood pressure?
- What is a healthy target for my blood pressure?
- How will I know when it is too high?
- How often should I monitor at home?
- How often should I have my blood pressure measured by a health professional?

## Understanding my blood pressure medication

Many people with high blood pressure don't feel any symptoms that's why it's important to measure it and continue to take your blood pressure medications as prescribed.

- Don't stop taking your medication if you feel better.
- If you experience side effects see your GP.

## Over the counter medications and my blood pressure medications: what to avoid

Common ailments like colds, flus, headaches.

- Avoid medications such as "Codral cold and flu" tablets, as the active ingredient constricts blood vessels.
- Anti-inflammatory tablets like Nurofen, Advil, and Voltaren also elevate blood pressure and must be avoided.
- See your GP or pharmacist regarding the best pain management for you.

## Monitoring Blood pressure at home

Take your blood pressure at the same time each day. Keep a note on your phone or in a diary. Measure around the same time in both the morning and the evening. Take your recording to your health professional to discuss if your BP is persistently high for a few days. Make sure your machine has been tested for accuracy – visit your pharmacist.

### Points to remember

- Rest your feet flat on the floor (do not cross your legs).
- Support your arm on the table.
- Use a cuff that fits correctly on your upper arm.
- Sit quietly for 5 minutes (go to a contented, relaxed place in your mind).
- Take 3 measurements using the middle of all 3 and record this number in your diary/phone.

