



Understanding Blood Pressure

Systolic

The top number, which is also 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, which is also the lower of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries between heartbeats (when the heart muscle is resting between beats and refilling with blood).

What is the AHA recommendation for healthy blood pressure?
This chart reflects blood pressure categories defined by
the American Heart Association.

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic mm Hg (upper #)		Diastolic mm Hg (lower #)
Normal	less than 120	and	less than 80
Prehypertension	120 - 139	or	80 - 89
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1	140 - 159	or	90 - 99
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2	160 or higher	or	100 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis (Emergency care needed)	Higher than 180	or	Higher than 110

* Your doctor should evaluate unusually low and/or high blood pressure readings.

Blood pressure is typically recorded as two numbers,
Systolic over Diastolic, written as a ratio like this:

$\frac{117}{76}$ mm Hg

Even if your blood pressure is normal, you should consider making lifestyle modifications to prevent the development of hypertension and improve your heart health.