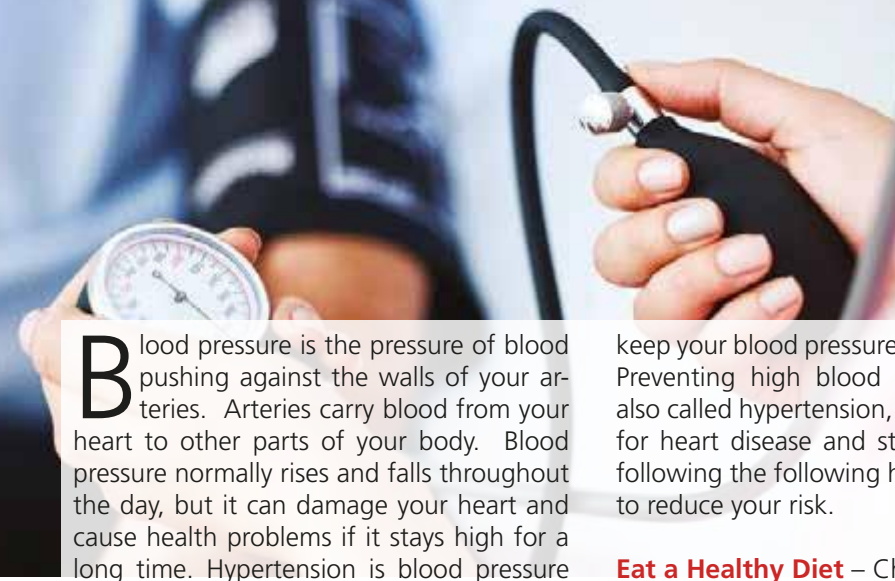


# Understanding Blood Pressure

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**B**lood pressure is the pressure of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries. Arteries carry blood from your heart to other parts of your body. Blood pressure normally rises and falls throughout the day, but it can damage your heart and cause health problems if it stays high for a long time. Hypertension is blood pressure that is higher than normal.

## **Blood pressure is measured using two numbers.**

The first number, called systolic blood pressure, measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats. The second number, called diastolic blood pressure, measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart rests between beats. If the measurement reads 120 systolic and 80 diastolic, you would say, "120 over 80," or write, "120/80 mmHg."

By living a healthy lifestyle, you can help

keep your blood pressure in a healthy range. Preventing high blood pressure, which is also called hypertension, can lower your risk for heart disease and stroke. Practice the following healthy living habits to reduce your risk.

**Eat a Healthy Diet** – Choose healthy meal and snack options to help you avoid high blood pressure. Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables along with foods rich in potassium, fiber, and protein and lower in salt (sodium) and saturated fat. Making these healthy changes can help keep blood pressure low and protect against heart disease and stroke. The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan has a proven record of helping people lower their blood pressure.

**Maintain a Healthy Weight** – Being overweight or obese increases your risk for high

blood pressure. To determine whether your weight is in a healthy range, talk with your health care team about ways to reach a healthy weight; including choosing healthy foods and getting regular physical activity.

## **Be Physically Active** –

Physical activity can help keep you at a healthy weight and lower your blood pressure. It is recommended that adults get at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, such as brisk walking or bicycling, every week. That's about 30 minutes a day.

**Do Not Smoke** – Smoking raises your blood pressure and puts you at higher risk for heart attack and stroke. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, quitting will lower your risk for heart disease. Your doctor can suggest ways to help you quit. 1-800-QUITNOW.



**Do you have high blood pressure?  
Do you have trouble keeping blood pressure managed?  
Are you not sure how to begin to monitor blood pressure?**

**Ask about CARE Direct!**

You will learn how to manage and monitor your blood pressure.

## **Benefits of CARE Direct:**

- Use of blood pressure monitor
- Blood pressure log
- Access to healthy lifestyle & nutrition information

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