

^Hypertension (From Page 11)

Hypertension can be classified in four categories, normal, prehypertension, stage 1 (mild) and stage 2 (severe).

Blood pressure is measured with an instrument called a sphygmomanometer, through which the user listens for the sound

of the force of blood in the patient's arteries when the heart beats (systolic pressure). The systolic pressure is the top number in the blood pressure reading. The

Health care professionals recommend treating the disease by changing an unhealthy lifestyle

second number is the pressure in the arteries of the heart at rest, the diastolic pressure.

A normal reading is a systolic pressure less than 120 mm Hg

and a diastolic less than 80 mm Hg.

Although hypertension can be controlled through medication, health care professionals recommend treating the disease by changing an unhealthy lifestyle such as eating habits, reducing stress and exercising.

^Pressure (From Previous Page)

YOUR NUMBERS

Keep a close eye on your blood pressure levels. Buy an at-home monitor, and take your reading at local pharmacies and grocery stores between doctor's visits. Also, watch your cholesterol and glucose numbers. Cholesterol should be checked by a simple blood test at least once every five years. Discuss monitoring glucose with your physician, especially if you have diabetes.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Talk to your doctor, and be honest about where you are with heart wellness — including habits that put you at risk. Your physician will discuss diet and exercise tips that are shaped by your specific medical and family history.

Consider widening your care-giving team beyond your general practitioner. A multi-faceted approach that also

includes a pharmacist, nurse, dietitian or a community health worker can help you manage risk factors from a variety of critical angles. Keep a journal, so you can better monitor blood-pressure numbers, medication schedules and future appointments.

You can lower your blood pressure, under the watchful eye of a health care professional if necessary, and you can take control of your long-term health.



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