



yes  
i  
want  
to  
help  
in  
the  
fight  
against  
kidney  
disease  
&  
support  
kidney  
health  
australia

# BLOOD PRESSURE

If high blood pressure is detected, your doctor will suggest dietary and lifestyle changes such as:

- losing excess weight,
- limiting your alcohol intake to two standard drinks or less if a male or one standard drink if a female,
- exercising regularly,
- reducing your fat and salt intake, and
- not smoking.

If changes to your lifestyle do not reduce your blood pressure, or if your blood pressure is high, your doctor will prescribe medications. These medications will lower your blood pressure, and in most cases, will need to be taken for the rest of your life. If you experience any side effects while taking blood pressure medication, report these to your doctor immediately.

if  
i  
have  
high  
blood  
pressure,  
what  
should  
i  
do?

Understand your blood pressure medications and take them exactly as prescribed.

Do not stop taking your medications of your own accord - this can be dangerous.

Follow your doctors' recommendations with regard to possible lifestyle changes.

Use community resources and programs to further assist you in lifestyle changes such as using the Quit Line 181 848 and attending local smoking cessation, weight reduction and physical activity programs.

Ask your doctor if it is okay for you to record your own blood pressure readings.

You and your doctor will need to work together to keep your blood pressure under control. It is important to remember that blood pressure can be controlled and successfully treated. Early detection and long-term treatment are the keys to a longer healthier life by preventing kidney failure.

how  
can  
people  
with  
high  
blood  
pressure  
help  
them-  
selves?



For more information about kidney and urinary health, please contact Kidney Health Australia:

Kidney Info Line  
freecall 1800 682 531

[www.kidney.org.au](http://www.kidney.org.au)

The Australian Kidney Foundation  
Trading as Kidney Health Australia  
2003/04

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# KIDNEY DISEASE &

what is blood pressure?

Blood is carried from the heart to all of the body's organs and tissues through vessels called arteries. Blood pressure is the pressure of the blood against the walls of these arteries as the heart pumps the blood around the body.

Blood pressure can be measured by a variety of techniques but the standard method is using an arm cuff attached to a mercury sphygmomanometer and a stethoscope. It is recorded as two numbers eg 130/70. The first number represents the systolic reading. This is the pressure in the arteries as the heart squeezes out blood during a beat. The second number represents the diastolic reading, which is the pressure of the blood in the arteries when the heart relaxes before the next beat.

how do we measure blood pressure?

what is a normal blood pressure reading?

Since the distribution of blood pressure varies over the population and within individuals during any one day, there are no fixed rules about what blood pressure reading is 'normal', but the following figures can be used as a guide:

NORMAL BLOOD PRESSURE	< 120/80
HIGH NORMAL	120-139/80-89
HIGH	> 140/90

If you have a confirmed blood pressure that is higher than this, you have high blood pressure, often called 'hypertension'. A single high reading is not enough to make the diagnosis - you need to have a series of high readings taken by your doctor on several different days, at different times.

No, your blood pressure does not stay the same. Your blood pressure will change in order to meet the demands of your body. It is usually at its highest when we exercise, and lowest when we sleep. It can also rise due to anxiety, excitement, activity or nervousness.

does blood pressure stay the same?

what's so bad about high blood pressure?

If blood pressure is left uncontrolled and remains high, it can damage the vessels that supply oxygenated blood to your internal organs. The very small vessels are often the first to be affected. This can go on to cause kidney disease, heart attack, strokes and loss of vision if left untreated.

Although some people with high blood pressure experience symptoms like headaches, dizziness or nosebleeds, high blood pressure does not usually give warning signs. Often high blood pressure is detected accidentally.

The only way to know if your blood pressure is high is to have it checked regularly by your doctor. You may have high blood pressure yet feel perfectly well.

how will i know that my blood pressure is high?

is high blood pressure related to kidney disease?

Yes, high blood pressure is closely related to kidney disease in a couple of different ways.

High blood pressure can cause kidney damage and kidney damage can cause high blood pressure.

The kidneys produce a hormone called renin; this helps to control blood pressure in the body. If the kidneys aren't functioning properly, renin release can be increased, raising the blood pressure.

If high blood pressure is left unchecked, it can cause blood vessels in the kidneys to become thickened and narrowed, possibly leading to reduced blood supply and reduced kidney function. Severe uncontrolled blood pressure may cause severe or total kidney failure.

High blood pressure can develop as a result of almost all kidney diseases. It can also be caused by renal artery stenosis - narrowing of the main artery to one or both kidneys. In addition, salt and fluid retention in a person with kidney failure can cause high blood pressure.

what are the other potential causes of high blood pressure?

The causes of high blood pressure can vary. In 90% of cases, no underlying pathological cause is identified.

Some people are at greater risk of developing high blood pressure than others. These include: older people, people with a family history of hypertension and people who are overweight. Smoking, high cholesterol, high fat and salt intake, high alcohol intake and too little exercise can also contribute to high blood pressure or make its effects more serious.

High blood pressure can occasionally be caused by an abnormality in an endocrine gland, such as the adrenal gland. These cases are relatively rare and can be cured by treatment of the gland abnormality. Certain drugs, such as birth control pills, decongestants and diet pills can also raise blood pressure. Your doctor can provide advice on these issues.

## donation form

### Donation amount

<input type="checkbox"/>	\$30	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$45	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$50	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$100
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or other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment details

<input type="checkbox"/>	Cheque payment
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Credit card	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amex	<input type="checkbox"/>	B/c	<input type="checkbox"/>	D/c	<input type="checkbox"/>	M/c	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visa
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Thankyou for your support. Please return this form to:

**Kidney Health Australia  
GPO Box 9993  
Your Capital City**

You will receive a receipt for any donations made. All gifts \$2 and over are tax deductible.