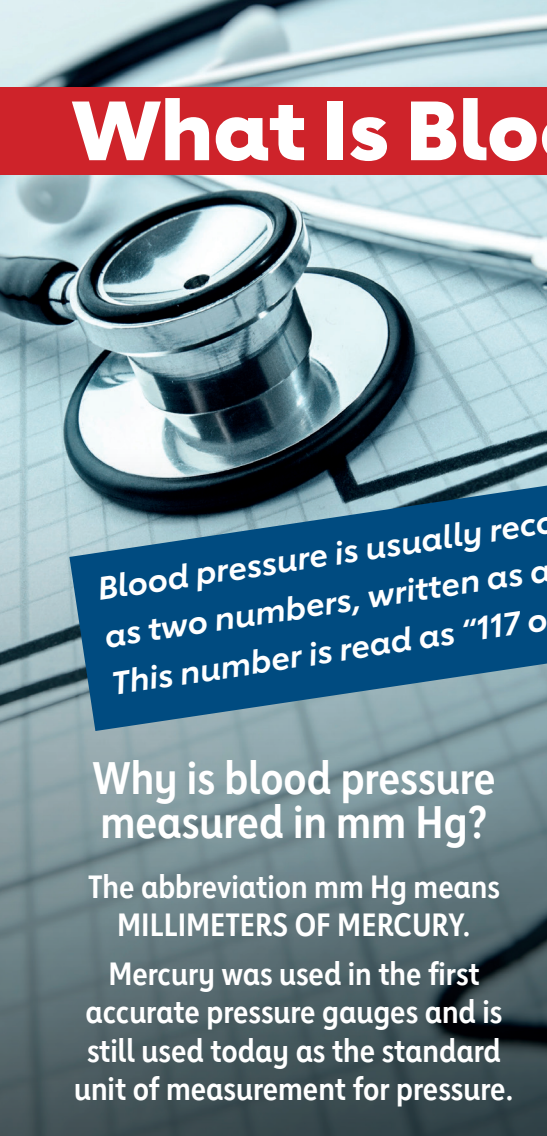


What Is Blood Pressure?



Blood pressure is usually recorded as two numbers, written as a ratio. This number is read as "117 over 76".

117
76

The first step to managing blood pressure is to understand what the levels mean and what is considered **NORMAL, ELEVATED, HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE,** and **HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS.**

SYSTOLIC (top number)

The higher of the two numbers, it measures the **pressure in the arteries when the heart beats** (when the heart muscle contracts).

DIASTOLIC (bottom number)

The lower of the two numbers, it measures the pressure in the arteries **when the heart is resting between heartbeats.**

Why is blood pressure measured in mm Hg?

The abbreviation mm Hg means **MILLIMETERS OF MERCURY.**

Mercury was used in the first accurate pressure gauges and is still used today as the standard unit of measurement for pressure.

American Heart Association Blood Pressure Categories

NORMAL

Systolic Reading (mm Hg)

under 120

and

Diastolic Reading (mm Hg)

under 80

ELEVATED

120–129

and

under 80

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE STAGE 1

130–139

or

80–89

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE STAGE 2

140+

or

90+

HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS

Consult your doctor immediately

over 180

and/
or

over 120

How Can I Manage My Blood Pressure?



Eat better

Eat a diet full of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, poultry, fish and nuts. Limit sugary foods and drinks, fatty or processed meats, and salt.



Quit smoking

Every time you smoke a cigarette, it can cause a temporary increase in blood pressure.



Get active

Physical activity not only helps control blood pressure, but also weight and stress levels



Limit sodium

Limit the amount of sodium you're eating each day. Some common foods that are loaded with excess sodium: cold cuts; pizza; canned soup; bread and rolls; fast food sandwiches; burritos and tacos.



Keep a healthy weight

If you're overweight, even a slight weight loss can prevent high blood pressure.

Learn more at www.heart.org/BPlevels



American Heart Association.

Hard Hats with Heart™