

# What Is High Blood Pressure?

With every beat of your heart, blood is pumped from your heart into your arteries.

The arteries carry the blood to all parts of your body.

The force of the blood pumped out from the heart creates pressure on the walls of the arteries.

You can feel this pressure in the rise and fall of your pulse.

Blood pressure goes up and down throughout the day.

But if it stays up, it's called high blood pressure.

High blood pressure means that the blood flows with too much force against the artery walls.

You can't feel it, but that force can damage the walls of your arteries.

And slowly, over time, the damage can lead to serious problems in other parts of your body, like your brain, eyes, heart, and kidneys.

But these problems can be prevented by managing high blood pressure.

And that begins with knowing what your numbers are and what they mean for you.

Blood pressure is recorded as two numbers, such as 120 over 80.

The first number, the systolic pressure, shows how hard the blood pushes when the heart beats or pumps.

And the second number, the diastolic pressure, shows how hard the blood pushes when the heart is relaxed between beats.

So when do the numbers mean you have high blood pressure?

It's when the top number stays high, the bottom number stays high, or both numbers stay high.

If you have high blood pressure, you and your doctor can make a plan to lower it.

It can help to remember that lowering the numbers also lowers your risk for serious problems.

And the ways that you can lower blood pressure include following a healthy lifestyle and taking medicine.

When you take care of your blood pressure, you're taking care of your whole body so that you can stay healthy, enjoy each day, and do more of the things you want to do.

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