UNDERSTAND READINGS
Blood pressure is how strongly blood goes through tubes (“arteries”) in your body to give your entire body energy. Blood pressure is like water in a water balloon: if there is too much, it can hurt the tubes in your body.\(^1\) Blood pressure is typically recorded as two numbers, one on top (“Systolic”) and one on bottom (“Diastolic”), written like this: Read as “117 over 76” millimeters of mercury (mm Hg).\(^2\)

SYSTOLIC
The top number, the higher of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats (when the heart squeezes).

DIASTOLIC
The bottom number, the lower of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart is resting between heart beats.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

EAT SMART
Eat healthy foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, legumes, nuts, plant-based proteins, and lean animal proteins like fish and seafood.

Limit sugary foods and drinks, red or processed meats, salty foods, refined carbohydrates and highly processed foods. Healthy foods can still taste really good!\(^4\)

MOVE MORE
Be active! Physical activity helps control blood pressure.\(^5\)

MANAGE WEIGHT
Eating healthy and moving more can help with managing weight. Small changes in weight can reduce blood pressure.\(^5\)

DON’T SMOKE OR VAPE
Every time you smoke, vape or use tobacco, your blood pressure can go up which isn’t good for your body.\(^6\)

SLEEP WELL
Not getting enough sleep can be harmful to your body and can cause health problems including high blood pressure.\(^7\)

How to Manage Blood Pressure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blood Pressure (BP) Category</th>
<th>Kids 12 years old and younger</th>
<th>Kids 13-17 years old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal BP</td>
<td>Less than 90% for age, sex and height</td>
<td>Less than 120/80 mm Hg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevated BP</td>
<td>90-94% for age, sex and height</td>
<td>120/80 to 129/80 mm Hg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1 hypertension</td>
<td>95% or greater + 11 mm Hg</td>
<td>130-139/80-89 mm Hg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2 hypertension</td>
<td>95% or greater + 12 mm Hg</td>
<td>140/90 mm Hg or higher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learn more at [heart.org/lifes8](https://heart.org/lifes8)

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\(^1\) What is High Blood Pressure? | American Heart Association
\(^2\) How High Blood Pressure Is Diagnosed | American Heart Association
\(^3\) Pediatric Primary Hypertension: An Underrecognized Condition: A Scientific Statement From the American Heart Association | Hypertension (ahajournals.org)
\(^4\) The American Heart Association Diet and Lifestyle Recommendations | Network American Heart Association
\(^5\) Screening for High Blood Pressure in Children and Adolescents: US Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation Statement | Adolescent Medicine | JAMA | JAMA
\(^6\) https://newsroom.heart.org/news/people-who-vape-had-worrisome-changes-in-cardiovascular-function-even-as-young-adults
\(^7\) How Does Sleep Affect Your Heart Health? | cdc.gov

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