

TIPS TO CONTROL YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE AND REDUCE STROKE RISK

GET YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKED REGULARLY

High blood pressure usually has no symptoms so adults should have it checked at least once a year or as advised by your doctor.

EAT MOSTLY 'WHOLE FOODS'

Share and enjoy home-cooked meals with your whānau and friends using fruit, vegetables, oats, pasta, rice, legumes (e.g. chickpeas, lentils and red kidney beans), eggs, fish, chicken, lean meat, unsalted nuts, milk and yoghurt, which are naturally low in salt, saturated fat and sugar.

EAT LESS SALT AND LESS PROCESSED FOOD

Use herbs, spices and lemon juice as alternatives to salt. Reduce intake of takeaways and processed foods e.g. bacon, sausages, corned beef, instant noodles or adding salt to food.

MOVE MORE

Walking, gardening, dancing, swimming, cycling, doing housework and using stairs instead of the lift are some examples.

BE SMOKEFREE

Contact Quitline for help to quit (0800 778 778).

KEEP YOUR ALCOHOL INTAKE LOW

Aim for at least two alcohol free days per week. Avoid binge drinking.

STRESS AND SLEEP

Make sure you are getting enough sleep and managing stress levels with regular exercise, and by finding time to do the things you enjoy, such as reading, visiting friends, or listening to music for example.

CAFFEINE

Aim for no more than the equivalent of four cups of coffee per day.

MEDICATION

Take any blood pressure medication prescribed by your doctor and continue taking it unless advised by your doctor.



Blood pressure and STROKE

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE IS ONLY ONE RISK FACTOR FOR STROKE.

TO KNOW AND MANAGE YOUR FULL RISK:

- Ask your doctor for a cardiovascular risk assessment.
- Contact **0800 STROKE (78 76 53)** or visit our website **stroke.org.nz** for more information.



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WHAT IS A STROKE?

A stroke is a brain attack.

Most strokes happen when a clot blocks the flow of blood to your brain. A less common cause of stroke is when a blood vessel bursts and bleeds into your brain.



A stroke can be fatal or cause long term disability.

WHAT IS BLOOD PRESSURE?

When your heart beats it pumps blood around your body. As the blood moves it pushes against the side of the blood vessels. The strength of this pushing is your blood pressure.

Your blood pressure is expressed as two numbers e.g. 120/80. Said as "120 over 80".



- The top number is your systolic pressure (e.g. 120). This is the pressure on your blood vessel walls as your heart pumps.
- The lower number is your diastolic pressure (e.g. 80). This is the pressure on your blood vessel walls as your heart rests between pumps.

MY BLOOD PRESSURE

TODAY MY BLOOD PRESSURE WAS:

Date:	My blood pressure reading:
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value=" /"/>

Based on your reading today you have been advised to get your blood pressure rechecked by your doctor:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> in 6-12 months | <input type="checkbox"/> in 3-6 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> within 1 month | <input type="checkbox"/> today |

Please note: your reading today and the following levels are provided only as a guide because your blood pressure is constantly changing.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

There is no 'ideal' blood pressure. However, for most people, lower is better.

SYSTOLIC	DIASTOLIC
LESS THAN 120 A healthy result, recheck in a year.	LESS THAN 80
BETWEEN 120-129 Monitor as there is a high chance of your blood pressure increasing.	LESS THAN 80
BETWEEN 130-139 A high result, usually treated with lifestyle changes. Medication may be suggested if you have other stroke risk factors.	BETWEEN 80-89
140 OR HIGHER Usually treated with medication and lifestyle changes.	90 OR HIGHER
GREATER THAN 180 Needs urgent attention right away.	GREATER THAN 120




Blood pressure typically varies throughout the day. Before you are diagnosed with high blood pressure, your doctor will usually measure your blood pressure over several occasions to make sure that the reading is consistent. You may be asked to monitor your blood pressure at home.

WHY IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE A PROBLEM?

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE IS THE NUMBER ONE MODIFIABLE RISK FACTOR FOR STROKE.

High blood pressure puts strain on all the blood vessels throughout your body, including the ones in your brain. This strain can damage your blood vessels, causing them to become harder and narrower. The vessels are then more likely to block or burst, causing a stroke.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE ALSO CONTRIBUTES TO:

-  heart attack
-  heart failure
-  kidney and eye disease

WHAT CAUSES HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

The causes of high blood pressure are complex, but you're more likely to have it if you:

- are getting older
- have a family history of high blood pressure
- eat too much salt and processed foods
- aren't physically active
- are overweight
- drink too much alcohol too often
- are a smoker
- are stressed
- have diabetes