



High blood pressure



What is high blood pressure?

As blood travels through the arteries, it presses against the artery walls. Blood pressure measures how hard the blood is pushing against these walls. High blood pressure is also known as **hypertension**. If your blood pressure is too high, your heart must work much harder to provide enough blood flow to your body.

Low blood pressure is also known as **hypotension**. As long as you are not experiencing symptoms (dizziness, fainting, blurred vision, cold/clammy, rapid breathing and/or feeling tired etc.) of low blood pressure, there is no need for concern.

What causes high blood pressure?

The exact causes of high blood pressure are not known, but several factors and conditions may play a role in its development, including:

- > Family history
- > Smoking
- > Being overweight
- > Lack of exercise

What are the risk factors?

- > Smoking
- > Being overweight
- > Lack of physical activity
- > Diet
- > Drinking too much alcohol (more than one to two drinks per day)
- > Stress
- > Ageing
- > Genetics/inherited from your family
- > Family history of high blood pressure
- > Chronic kidney disease



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What are the signs and symptoms?

While high blood pressure doesn't always cause symptoms, it still affects the body and puts a person at risk for those long-term health problems.

If you have very high blood pressure, or your blood pressure rises quickly, you may have headaches, problems with your vision, fits or black-outs.

The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure checked each time you visit a health service.

The National Heart Foundation offers a general guide:

Optimal	<120 and <80
Normal	120-129 and/or 80-84
High-normal	130-139 and/or 85-89
Mild hypertension	140-159 and/or 90-99
Moderate hypertension	160-179 and/or 100-109
Severe hypertension	≥180 and/or ≥110

For more information

Contact your local Aboriginal Medical Service or Health worker. Aboriginal Chronic Care workers are located in NSW Health Services and some Aboriginal Medical Services.

PDFs can be downloaded and printed from Chronic Care for Aboriginal People Program: www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/ccap

Email: ACI-CCAP@health.nsw.gov.au

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Reduce your risk of high blood pressure

- ✓ If you smoke, try and quit
- ✓ Eat smaller portions and less kilojoules
- ✓ Eat more fruit and vegetables
- ✓ Make water your drink
- ✓ Be active every day
- ✓ Sit less and move more
- ✓ Eat a diet low in saturated fat and salt
- ✓ Limit alcohol intake
- ✓ Take all your medications as prescribed
- ✓ Get your doctor or health worker to check your blood pressure at each visit

Facts

- > High blood pressure is more common among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than non-Aboriginal people and is a major contributor to the increased risk of heart attack, stroke and other circulatory diseases.

Free services

- > **Get Healthy Service**
Call the 'Get Healthy Service' for free personal telephone coaching to support you with your physical activity goals'. Your free NSW Health service provides the expertise and motivation you need to help reach your goals.

www.gethealthynsw.com.au
or call 1300 806 258

- > **NSW Health Make Healthy Normal**
www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au



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