



## BLOOD PRESSURE:

What do the numbers mean?

Blood pressure is the force of blood moving through your arteries, and is measured with two numbers. The first, or top number, is your pressure when your heart beats, called the systolic pressure.

The second, or bottom number, measures the force of blood in your arteries while your heart is relaxed (filling with blood between beats). This is called the diastolic pressure.

Blood pressure usually varies throughout the day. For adults, a blood pressure reading of **lower than 120/80** is considered normal. Readings **between 120/80 and 139/89** are considered pre-hypertension. People with pre-hypertension do not have blood pressure as low as it should be, but not are yet considered to have high blood pressure. Your doctor may tell you that you have high blood pressure if you have two measurements of blood pressure readings, on physician office visits at least one week apart, that are **higher than 140/90**.

The United States Preventive Services Task Force has issued guidelines that state people with blood pressure lower than 120/80 should be screened every two years. Your doctor may determine that your blood pressure should be screened more frequently.

