



What about Low Blood Pressure?

Some people have naturally occurring hypotension or low blood pressure, which is a normal variant. It is important to be aware of the variation so that precautions can be taken. Low normal blood pressure is considered to be 90-119 mmHg/51-59 mmHg. Typically, low blood pressure is not concerning unless you can symptoms that are troublesome. Symptoms of low blood pressure include:

- Dizziness - especially after lying or sitting for long periods of time
- Cold hands and/or feet
- Dizziness /feeling unwell when exposed to high temperatures
- Fainting

Drinking 1-2 liters of water per day and/or participating in aerobic exercise 3-4 times per week may help to alleviate symptoms. Individuals with low blood pressure should get up slowly after sitting or lying for long periods of time. If severe problems occur or symptoms are problematic medical attention may be required.

Where is Your Blood Pressure?		
Category	Reading	Meaning
Low – hypotension	<90 mmHg/ <50 mmHg	See your doctor if you are having symptoms
Low Normal	90-119 mmHg/ 51-69 mmHg	See your doctor if you are having symptoms
Optimal	<120 mmHg/ <80 mmHg	
High Normal	130-139 mmHg/ 85-89 mmHg	Consider lifestyle changes and frequent checks
Mild – Grade 1 Hypertension	140-159 mmHg/ 90-99 mmHg	Requires medical supervision
Moderate – Grade 2 Hypertension	160-179 mmHg/ 100-109 mmHg	Medications and careful management
Severe – Grade 3 Hypertension	180-199 mmHg/ 110-119 mmHg	Medications and careful management
Very Severe – Grade 4 Hypertension	>200 mmHg/ >120 mmHg	Immediate medical assistance needed – hospital

Provided to you by



**University of Lethbridge
Health Centre**
Students Union Building - SU 020
Phone: 403-329-2484
Email: healthcentre@uleth.ca
www.uleth.ca/hr/health-centre



University of Lethbridge
Health Centre
@ULethHealth



BLOOD PRESSURE



High or Low?

Everything You Need to Know!



What is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is a measurement in millimeter of mercury (mmHg) used to identify the pressure or force of blood in the circulatory system. The systolic (top) number reflects the maximum pressure occurring when the heart is contracting and pushing blood out to the body. The diastolic (bottom) number is the measurement of pressure when the heart is at rest and filling with blood. A normal range of blood pressure is 90-130mmHg/60-84mmHg.

Why Should I Be Concerned?

A high or low blood pressure can be concerning because of the way it affects the body and its functions. If left untreated, abnormal blood pressures can permanently damage various parts of the body including the brain, eyes, kidneys, heart and arteries. High blood pressure is also directly related to a person's risk for heart attack or stroke.

How is Blood Pressure Taken?

Blood pressure is taken using an automatic sphygmomanometer (blood pressure cuff) or a manual cuff and stethoscope. The cuff is placed around your upper arm and inflated. As the cuff deflates the blood pressure reading will be detected. When going to have your blood pressure taken keep the following items in mind to ensure an accurate reading:

- No caffeine 30 minutes prior
- No nicotine 30 minutes prior
- Empty bladder and bowels prior
- No tight clothing on arms
- No acute stress, anxiety or pain
- Sit comfortably with feet flat on the floor
- No talking during the reading
- Take deep relaxing breaths during the reading

Everyone should have their blood pressure checked at least once a year. Some people with health concerns may require more frequent checks.

What is High Blood Pressure?

Hypertension or high blood pressure is considered a reading with the systolic above 140mmHg and/or a diastolic above 90mmHg. There are many factors which can increase the risk of having high blood pressure. Some risk factors are non-modifiable and beyond our control, whereas others can be managed or eliminated by our lifestyle choices. Risk factors include:

- Gender – Male
- Race/Ethnicity – African descent
- Age
- Diabetes
- Family history of high blood pressure
- Smoking
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Alcohol consumption >2 drinks per day
- Diet high in salt
- Diet high in saturated fats

It is important for all individuals to have their blood pressure checked regularly as it usually rises slowly over time. Experts recommend treatment for people with even mildly increasing blood pressure to reduce the risk of its damaging effects. Remember many of the risk factors for high blood pressure we can manage on our own by making positive lifestyle choices.

