



MARCH NEWSLETTER

What is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of the blood pushing against the walls of the arteries. Blood pressure is highest when the heart contracts (while it is pumping blood). This is called systolic pressure. When the heart is at rest (between beats) blood pressure is lower. This is called diastolic pressure. Blood pressure is always given in these two numbers. The systolic measurement is on top, and the diastolic is on the bottom (i.e. 120/80). Both numbers are equally important.

What is High Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure changes during the day. It is lowest when a person is asleep and rises when a person gets up. Most of the time, it stays about the same or within a range. If the blood pressure rises and stays above the recommended levels, a person may have high blood pressure.

Why is High Blood Pressure important?

High blood pressure, if not controlled, increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease in a person.

How is High Blood Pressure diagnosed?

Since high blood pressure does not generally have any symptoms, the only way to diagnose high blood pressure is to get it tested at the doctor's office.

Blood Pressure Classifications

There are several categories of blood pressure. The following table shows the categories for adults 18 and older.

Category	Systolic	Diastolic
Optimal BP	Less than 120	Less than 80
Pre-hypertension	120-139	80-89
Stage 1 hypertension	140-159	90-99
Stage 2 hypertension	160 or greater	100 or greater

For more information on hypertension visit the links below

- The Facts about High Blood Pressure
•www.nhlbi.nih.gov/index.htm
- www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/hypertens.htm
•www.ash-us.org
•www.americanheart.org

All information accredited to the Utah Department of Health

