



PUMP IT UP!

MAKE A START TO A HEALTHY HEART

Did you know?

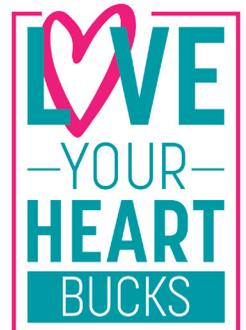
One in three adults in Buckinghamshire has high blood pressure...



Are you one of them?



Buckinghamshire
Council



What is high blood pressure?

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is a serious condition where your heart works harder to pump blood around your body. If left untreated, your arteries can stiffen and narrow. This makes it easier for fatty material to clog them up, which can lead to a range of serious health conditions affecting different parts of your body.



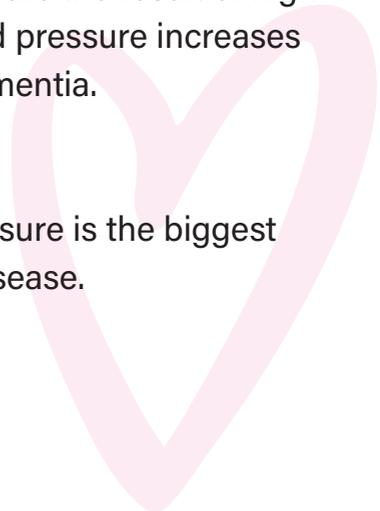
Heart - With high blood pressure you are more likely to develop heart disease. For example, high blood pressure is a factor in half of all heart attacks.



Brain - One in two strokes are the result of high blood pressure. High blood pressure increases your risk of developing dementia.



Kidneys - High blood pressure is the biggest cause of chronic kidney disease.



Factors affecting high blood pressure

Anyone can have high blood pressure, but your blood pressure is affected by many factors.



Age - Your chance increases as you get older.



Ethnicity - It is more common in people of South Asian and African-Caribbean communities.



Family history - It can run in families.



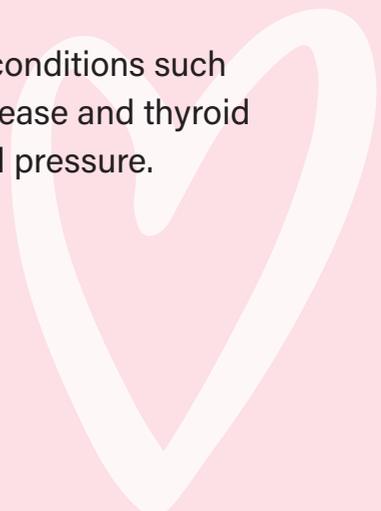
Gender - Before age 55, men are more likely to develop high blood pressure than women.



Lifestyle habits - You are more likely to develop it if you're overweight, smoke, eat too much salt, or don't take regular exercise.



Medical conditions - Certain conditions such as diabetes, obesity, kidney disease and thyroid problems can cause high blood pressure.



Early warning signs

High blood pressure rarely has noticeable symptoms. But if untreated, it increases your risk of serious problems such as heart attacks and strokes.

Some people may get early warning signs of high blood pressure such as:

- Extreme tiredness and feeling unwell.
- Headaches.
- Feeling of pressure in the ears or chest.

But most people with high blood pressure feel healthy and fine. High blood pressure often has no noticeable symptoms or early warning signs. Sometimes it is not diagnosed until it is too late.

The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to **check your blood pressure regularly.**



Getting your blood pressure checked is quick and easy

In Buckinghamshire, there are lots of places where you can check your blood pressure.

- At some Buckinghamshire Council libraries using one of our Health Stations.
- At local pharmacies.
- At your GP practice.
- In designated community and faith settings.
- At home using a portable blood pressure monitoring kit. *Did you know you can borrow one from some Buckinghamshire Council libraries?*

Visit [buckinghamshire.gov.uk/love-your-heart](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/love-your-heart) to see where your nearest library Health Station is, and where you can check out a portable blood pressure monitoring kit on loan.

How to take your blood pressure reading

When you check your blood pressure, it is important to use the correct size blood pressure cuff that fits your arm.

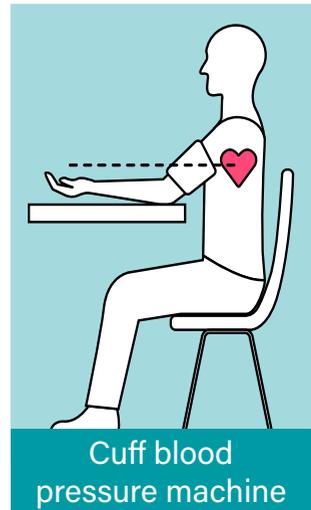
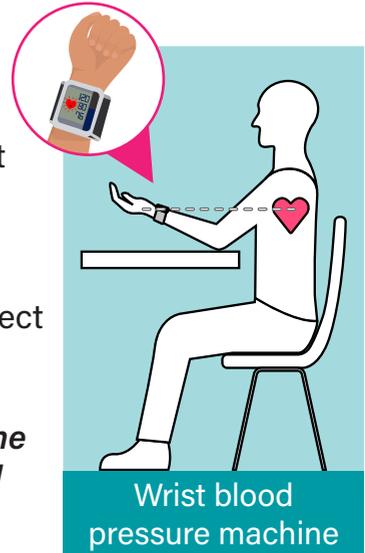
Before you start

- Do not drink coffee for at least 30 minutes before measuring.
- Do not use tobacco products for at least 30 minutes before measuring.
- Do not exercise or eat a large meal two hours before measuring.
- Use the bathroom. A full bladder can affect the reading.

Readings can vary from arm to arm. Use the same arm each time you check your blood pressure.

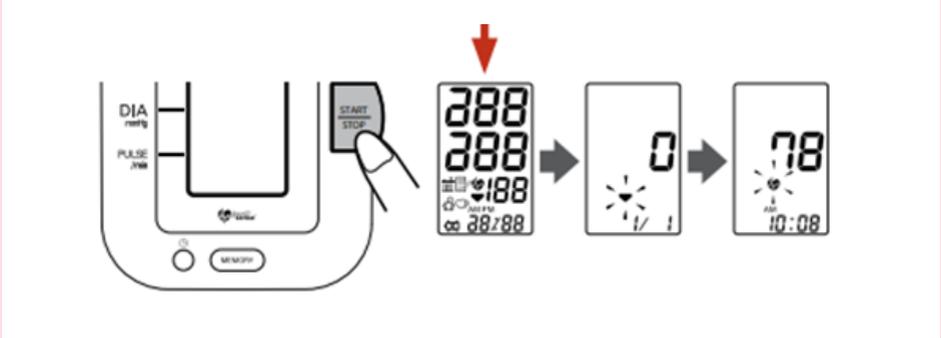
For an accurate measurement, be sure to:

- Sit quietly in a chair for 5 minutes before measuring.
- Sit with your back supported and feet flat on the ground. Do not cross your legs.
- Remove clothing from your upper arm.
- Make sure your arm is supported at the level of your heart on a table or armrest.
- Do not talk while having your blood pressure measured.
- When using a wrist cuff, place your palm facing up with the screen of the monitor also facing up on the inside of your wrist.



Taking the reading

- Take two readings, each five minutes apart.
- Press the START/STOP button on the monitor. Display symbols will appear on the screen.



- The cuff will inflate on its own and feel tight for a few seconds.
- The cuff will relax and display the reading. Record the reading.
- Press STOP.
- Wait five minutes. Repeat these steps for a total of two readings.

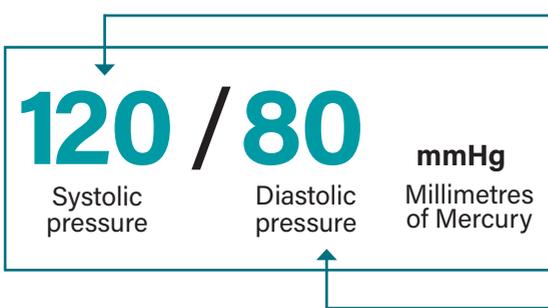


Scan the QR code to watch a video on how to take your blood pressure or visit [youtube.com/britishheartfoundation](https://www.youtube.com/britishheartfoundation) and search for 'blood pressure at home!'

What do my numbers mean?

Your blood pressure reading shows how hard your heart is working to pump/push blood through your body. Although it goes up and down naturally throughout the day depending on your activity, you don't want it to be too high for too much of the time.

Your reading is written as two numbers. The first is when the pressure is at its highest (called systolic pressure), and the second at its lowest (called diastolic pressure). For example, your reading will be something like 120/80 mmHg. mmHg is a unit for measuring blood pressure. You may also hear it referred to as '120 over 80'. A healthy blood pressure is 120/80 or less. You should aim to get your blood pressure to this level.



Systolic pressure: This is the **highest level** of your blood pressure - when your heart beats.

Diastolic pressure: This is the **lowest level** of your blood pressure - when your heart relaxes between beats.

How high is my blood pressure and what should I do?

90/60 or less	Low - If you are having symptoms such as dizziness or fainting, it is important that you see your GP.
90/60 - 120/80 mmHg	Normal - Great! Check your blood pressure monthly and lead a healthy lifestyle to stay in the normal range.
120/80 - 140/90 mmHg	High side of normal - To prevent high blood pressure, look below for some lifestyle changes that can improve your blood pressure.
140/90 - 180/120 mmHg	High blood pressure - Re-check it over the next week. If it's consistently high, speak to your GP or practice nurse.
180/120 or higher	Very high - Re-check it again in 5 minutes. If you have a severe headache or blurred vision speak to your GP within 48 hours. If you have no symptoms, have a follow up measurement at your GP or local pharmacy as soon as possible. Do not ignore it.

To help keep your blood pressure at a healthy level:



Move more - even a small increase in exercise can help reduce your blood pressure



Maintain a healthy and balanced diet - which includes plenty of fruit and vegetables and not too much salt



Stop smoking - smoking increases your heart rate and raises your blood pressure



If you drink - cut down on your alcohol consumption.

Small changes make a HUGE difference

Even making one lifestyle change can decrease your blood pressure by small amounts, and small decreases in blood pressure result in huge health benefits.

- Walking 30 minutes, five days a week → can decrease blood pressure by **10 points**
- Losing 5-10lbs. of weight → can decrease blood pressure by **5 points**
- Quitting tobacco → can decrease blood pressure by **5-10 points**
- Limiting sodium (salt) to 1,500 mg. per day → can decrease blood pressure by **2-8 points**

Every 5 points decrease in blood pressure reduces

- risk of stroke by 34%
- risk of heart attack by 21%

Every 3 points decrease in blood pressure reduces

- risk of stroke by 8%
- risk of heart attack by 5%

Record your results

Take regular checks and record your numbers. Write down your blood pressure results in the table below each time you take it.

Once you have completed the BP readings chart below, you can share these with your GP practice who can update your NHS record. Please ensure you provide your full name, date of birth and NHS number (if known).

Name _____

Date of birth _____

NHS number _____

Blood pressure readings	Date / time	Top number (systolic)	Bottom number (diastolic)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			



To find out more and to take our feedback survey, visit our webpage [buckinghamshire.gov.uk/love-your-heart](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/love-your-heart)

Be Healthy Bucks



Where can I get local support?

Be Healthy Bucks is a free health and wellbeing service that can make a real difference to your quality of life. Tailored support focuses on creating long-lasting behaviour change by helping adults, children and young people in Buckinghamshire make healthier lifestyle choices.

Services include:

- Adult weight management
- Child weight management
- Smoking cessation
- Support to reduce alcohol consumption
- Community-based NHS Health Checks

Find out more about Be Healthy Bucks

Scan the QR code or visit bhb.maximusuk.co.uk



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