MetLife | Return to Health

Hypertension

The American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association define hypertension as a **blood pressure at or above 130/80 mmHg.**[3]

The top number, known as systolic blood pressure, measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats. The bottom number, known as diastolic blood pressure, measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart rests between beats.



28-38%

Of adults report being told they have high blood pressure[1]

50% Males
44% Females

56% Non-Hispanic Black Adults

48% Non-Hispanic White Adults

46% Non-Hispanic Asian Adults

39% Hispanic Adults

Some symptoms and warning signs of severe hypertension:[4]

- Severe headaches
- Shortness of breath
- Nosebleeds
- Severe anxiety
- Feeling pulsations in the head and neck
- Elevated blood pressure

Commonly called "the silent killer," there are typically no warning signs or symptoms, and many adults do not know they have it.

How can you help prevent and manage hypertension?

High blood pressure can be managed with lifestyle changes. Some recommendations include:[3]

- Following a DASH or low-sodium diet
- At least 150 minutes of physical activity a week
- Reducing stress
- Quitting smoking
- Limiting alcohol and caffeine
- Maintaining a healthy weight

In addition, your healthcare provider may recommend and prescribe medica- tions to help manage blood pressure. If your healthcare provider is concerned about your blood pressure, talk with your treatment team about changes you can make to manage the condition.[3]

According to the CDC[1], nearly half of adults in the United States (47% or 116 million) have hypertension, and only about a quarter (24%) of those adults have their hypertension under control.

The information contained herein is for purely informational purposes only, and is not intended to present medical, occupational, or therapeutic advice.

1. https://www.cdc.gov/high-blood-pressure/data-research/facts-stats/index.html (replace the 2 with 1 for stats and definition)
2. Whelton PK, Carey RM, Aronow WS, Casey DE, Collins KJ, Dennison C, et al. 2017 ACC/AHA/AAPA/ABC/ACPM/AGS/APhA/ASH/ASPC/NMA/PCNA Guideline for the prevention, detection, evaluation, and management of high blood pressure in adults external icon. Hypertension. 2018;71(19):e13–115.
3. https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20373417

Metropolitan Life Insurance Company | 200 Park Avenue | New York, NY 10166
L5416440[exp0528][All States and][All Territories] © 2026 MetLife Services and Solutions, LLC