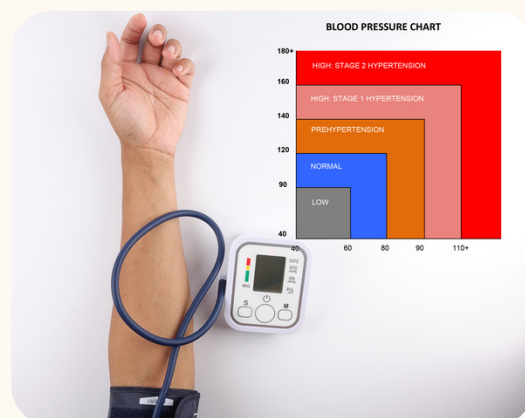
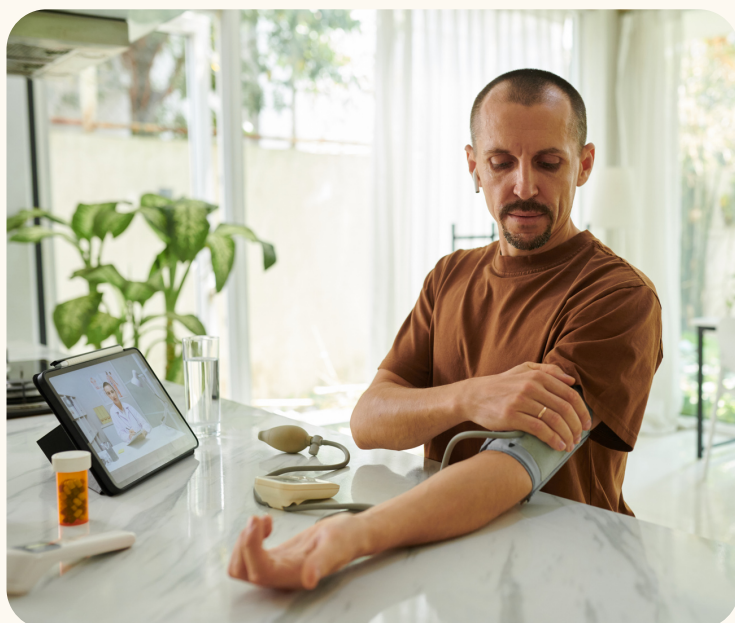




PATIENT HEALTH GUIDE

High blood pressure

Understanding your numbers, what raises your risk, and what you can do about it.



What is high blood pressure?



Nearly 5 million people in the UK are living with high blood pressure without even knowing it.

Altogether, around 16 million people in the UK have the condition - roughly 1 in 3 adults. (British Heart Foundation, 2026)

Blood pressure is simply the force of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries as your heart pumps it around your body. It's one of the most common health conditions out there, and often the hardest to spot, because it rarely comes with symptoms.

Understanding your reading

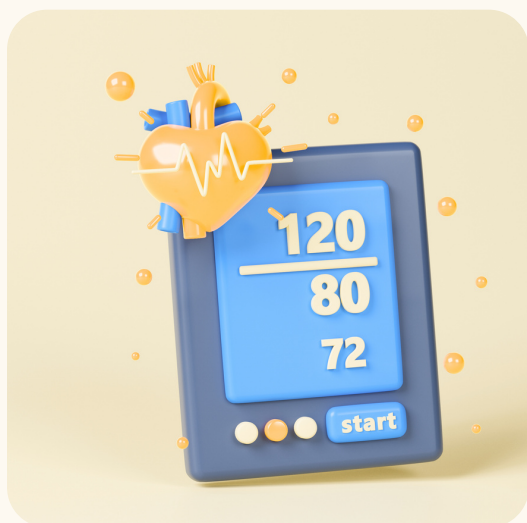
Every blood pressure reading is written as two numbers – for example, 120/80 mmHg.

120 systolic

The pressure in your arteries when your heart beats.

80 diastolic

The pressure when your heart rests between beats.



An **ideal** blood pressure sits between 90/60 and 120/80 mmHg. A reading of **140/90 mmHg or above** is generally considered high when checked by a healthcare professional (home readings tend to run slightly lower, so your GP will use a different threshold if you're monitoring at home). Blood pressure naturally moves around throughout the day - a single high reading isn't necessarily cause for concern, but a consistent pattern is worth checking with your GP.

A condition worth keeping an eye on

Because high blood pressure often has no symptoms, it's sometimes called a "silent" condition. You could have it for years without knowing, which is exactly why so many people are currently living with it undiagnosed.

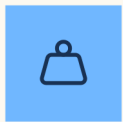
Left unmanaged over a long period, it puts extra strain on your heart and blood vessels, which can raise the risk of more serious problems, including stroke, heart attack, kidney disease and vascular dementia.

Here's the encouraging part:

High blood pressure is one of the most manageable health conditions there is. Even a small reduction can make a meaningful difference to your long-term health.

What increases your risk

Some factors are within your control, others aren't. It's helpful to know both, so you and your GP can decide how closely your blood pressure should be monitored. Having one or more of these doesn't mean you'll definitely develop high blood pressure, but it's a good reason to get your numbers checked regularly.



Being overweight



High-salt diet



Limited physical activity



Higher alcohol intake



Smoking



Poor sleep



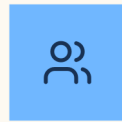
High caffeine intake



Getting older



Family history



Black African or Caribbean heritage

What you can do about it

Lifestyle changes can have a real, measurable impact on your blood pressure. Small sustainable shifts tend to work best.



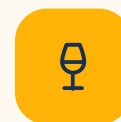
Get moving, even a daily walk helps



Keep to a healthy weight



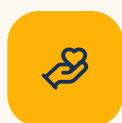
Cut back on salt



Cut down on alcohol and caffeine



Stop smoking



Look after your stress levels



Eat more fruit and vegetables

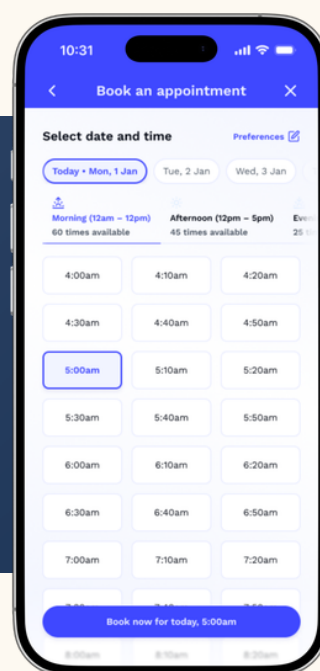
If you're finding any of these changes difficult, you don't have to figure it out alone; your GP can point you toward support, whether that's help quitting smoking, guidance on healthy eating, or simply someone to talk through a plan with.

If lifestyle changes aren't enough

Sometimes, even with all the right changes, blood pressure stays high - and that's not a failure, it's just how the condition can behave for some people. In these cases, your GP may recommend medication. There are several options, and your GP will work with you to find what suits you best.

We're here if you need us

If you'd like to talk through your blood pressure, your risk factors, or anything else covered here, our team is on hand to help.



SOURCES

British Heart Foundation (2026), 'Silent killer' warning as 5 million in UK are unaware they have high blood pressure · NHS England (2026),
People searching NHS advice on high blood pressure skyrocketed last year · NHS, High blood pressure (hypertension) · NICE, Hypertension in adults: diagnosis and management