

Blood Pressure: *Know Your Number*

Provided by your Neighborly Care Network Dietitian

Older adults are at high risk for hypertension and for cardiovascular effects of high blood pressure. By monitoring their blood pressure and taking their medication appropriately, older adults will partner with their health care providers to better manage their blood pressure and reduce their risk of heart attack and stroke.

In 2004, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute changed the blood pressure classifications and added a new classification known as “prehypertension” for people with blood pressure in the 120-139/80-89 mm Hg ranges. Prehypertension is intended to identify those individuals who may benefit from early intervention.

Hypertension should not be diagnosed on the basis of a single measurement. Initial elevated readings should be confirmed on at least two subsequent visits during one to several weeks.

Blood Pressure Classification	Systolic mm Hg		Diastolic mm Hg
Normal	<120	and	<80
Prehypertension	120-139	or	80-89
Stage 1 Hypertension	140-159	or	90-99
Stage 2 Hypertension	≥160	or	≥100

Older adults may have impaired cardiovascular reflexes that make them more susceptible to hypotension (low blood pressure). For this reason, blood pressure should always be measured in the standing, as well as seated or supine, position.