

### To prevent or control high blood pressure:

- Exercise—do things that raise your heart rate, such as brisk walking, playing sports or yard work.
- Quit smoking—ask your doctor for help.
- Eat well—ask your doctor for help with a weight loss plan.
- Use less salt and eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Limit alcohol.

### Talk with your doctor before making lifestyle changes.

## Come prepared for a blood pressure reading

### Follow these four steps to be prepared for your blood pressure check.

- 1. Wear a short-sleeved shirt**, or other shirt that you can easily slip off your arm.
- 2. At least 30 minutes before your appointment, DO NOT:**
  - » smoke
  - » exercise
  - » drink caffeine (no coffee, tea, or soda).
- 3. For at least five minutes before your blood pressure check:**
  - » empty your bladder
  - » sit down and relax with both feet on the floor and your back supported.
- 4. Don't talk** while your blood pressure is being checked.

### Remember to record your blood pressure numbers in your log.

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## What do your blood pressure numbers mean?

Blood pressure is measured by two numbers. The top number, “systolic,” is the pressure in your blood vessels when your heart beats. The bottom number, “diastolic,” is the pressure in your blood vessels between heartbeats. Your blood pressure is:

**Normal blood pressure:** Great! You should have your blood pressure rechecked once or twice a year.

**Elevated or high blood pressure:** Ask your doctor the following:

- When should I have my blood pressure checked again?
- Do I need treatment for my high blood pressure?
- What about lifestyle changes?

