

Take control of your **Blood Pressure**



CRÍ

Fighting Heart Disease & Stroke

What is high blood pressure?

High blood pressure (**also known as hypertension**) occurs when the force of the blood flowing through your blood vessels is consistently too high. This causes many harmful effects on the body and, if left untreated, can significantly increase your risk of having a stroke or heart attack.

How do I know if I have high blood pressure?

Usually, high blood pressure has no symptoms. The only way to find out if you have high blood pressure is to have it checked (at least once a year, or more often if advised).

What should my blood pressure be?

It is very important to know your blood pressure numbers, and keeping your blood pressure (BP) within a healthy range helps protect your blood vessels, heart, and other organs. **Optimal blood pressure is considered to be less than 120/70 mmHg.** It is recommended that people under 40 have their blood pressure checked every 3 years, while those over 40 should have it checked annually.

Target Level

Optimal BP is considered to be less than 120/70 mmHg.

*2024 European Society of Cardiology (ESC) Guidelines for Elevated Blood Pressure and Hypertension

What causes high blood pressure?

In the majority of people, there is no single clear cause of high blood pressure. However, there are a number of factors that contribute to high blood pressure. These include:

- Age (as you grow older, blood pressure tends to rise)
- Being overweight
- A high intake of sodium (salt) in the diet
- Physical inactivity
- A high intake of alcohol
- Family history of high blood pressure
- Ethnic Origin (African, Caribbean and South Asian)
- Other medical conditions, including kidney disease and disorders of the adrenal glands

High Level

BP is considered high when it is consistently above 140/90 mmHg.

How do I lower my blood pressure?

Everyone can benefit from taking steps to lower their blood pressure and ensuring it stays within a normal range. If lifestyle measures alone are not effective in keeping your blood pressure under control, it may be necessary to combine these changes with prescribed medications.

If you are prescribed medication, it is usually for life, and you must not stop taking it without seeking the advice of your doctor.



Lifestyle recommendations for lowering blood pressure:

- **Maintain a healthy weight** - even small reductions can make a big difference to your blood pressure.
- **Stop smoking** - for support, visit www.quit.ie or talk to your GP, nurse, or local pharmacist.
- **Avoid adding salt** to your cooking and at the table. Remember that sea salt, rock salt, garlic salt and table salt all have the same sodium content.
- **No alcohol is the healthiest option** - less than 17 standard drinks per week for men; less than 11 standard drinks per week for women.
- **Increase your fruit and vegetable intake** to 7 servings per day.
- **Become more physically active** and aim for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week (e.g. 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week). Resistance training is recommended twice a week.
- **Try to manage stress** and learn ways to cope with it in your life.



For more information or support, please visit our website at www.croi.ie or contact Croí's telephone helpline, Croí Connects, available weekdays from 9 am to 5:30 pm on **091-332999**, or by email at healthteam@croi.ie.

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