



American Heart Association®

Life's Essential 8™

→ for kids

DON'T BE PRESSURED

Blood pressure is how strongly blood goes through tubes ("arteries") in your body to give you energy. This is like how pipes carry water in a house. When our heart pumps blood, it pushes the blood through tubes, and that's how it brings oxygen and nutrients to all the parts of our body.

Sometimes, when we eat too much salty or fatty foods or don't get enough exercise, our tubes can become narrow and tight. It's like when a straw gets squished a bit. When that happens, it makes it harder for the blood to flow smoothly through the tubes and can create extra pressure. It's like when we squeeze a water hose, and the water squirts out with more force. That extra pressure on our blood vessels is called high blood pressure and makes our hearts work extra hard. We want our heart to stay strong, but having high blood pressure can make it tired.



The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children should start having their blood pressure checked at age 3.



UNDERSTAND READINGS

Blood pressure is typically recorded as two numbers, one on top ("Systolic") and one on bottom ("Diastolic"), written like this: Read as "117 over 76" millimeters of mercury (mm Hg).¹

SYSTOLIC

The top number, the higher of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats (when the heart squeezes).

DIASTOLIC

The bottom number, the lower of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart is resting between heart beats.

Write your blood pressure below:

_____ / _____

Learn more at heart.org/lifes8forkids

¹ How High Blood Pressure Is Diagnosed | American Heart Association