



## Take Steps to Keep Blood Pressure Within Normal Range

By Vicky Chen-Yang, MD

**H**ypertension, which is the medical term for high blood pressure, is a very common condition worldwide. Its treatment is the single most common reason for office visits of nonpregnant adults and for the use of prescription medication. Roughly half of all patients with hypertension do not have adequate control.

### The Importance of Healthy Blood Pressure

The only way to know if you have high blood pressure, also called hypertension, is to have your blood pressure tested. Understanding your blood pressure numbers is key to keeping your blood pressure within a healthy range. Your blood pressure reading consists of two numbers: the top number is the systolic pressure and indicates how much pressure your blood is exerting against your artery walls each time your heart beats. The bottom number is diastolic pressure which indicates the artery wall pressure while the heart rests between beats.

The guidelines of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart

Association call for normal ranges as follows:

Top number (systolic) – less than 120  
Bottom number (diastolic) – less than 80

When blood pressure is consistently out of normal boundaries, it can have great impact.

High blood pressure can damage arteries, cause heart and kidney disease, damage brain cells and affect your eyesight.

There are various levels of high blood pressure which is why your provider will want to monitor you regularly. In general terms, the increase in risk begins as the pressure rises above 115/75 in all age groups.

### Keeping Numbers Within Normal Ranges

For those approaching numbers above the normal range, lifestyle changes are usually recommended. Blood pressure numbers often show corresponding decreases with both weight loss and healthy low fat, low salt food plans. Other

lifestyle changes that can improve blood pressure are:

1. Increase potassium intake 3500-5000mg/day preferably from foods rather than supplements.
2. Increased exercise and aerobic activity
3. Decreasing daily alcohol consumption to two drinks for men and one for women.

There are various medications available for lowering blood pressure. If you begin taking prescribed medicine, regular adherence is important to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

At every step along the way, work in partnership with your health care provider. The importance of getting your blood pressure to a healthy range and keeping it there is a goal we all share!

### LOCATIONS

Thunderbird Internal Medicine – Glendale  
5620 W. Thunderbird Rd #C-1, #F-1 & #G-2  
Glendale, Arizona 85306

Thunderbird Internal Medicine - Phoenix  
9150 W. Indian School Rd #118  
Phoenix, Arizona 85037