

# I've been told I have high blood pressure.

## What does this mean?

West Yorkshire and Harrogate  
**HEALTHY HEARTS**



Your blood pressure is higher than what's recommended.

High blood pressure, or hypertension, rarely has noticeable symptoms. But if untreated, it increases your risk of developing serious health problems such as heart attacks and strokes.

**Treating** your high blood pressure can dramatically **reduce your risk**.

**You can do this through making lifestyle changes and/or taking medication.**

However, making lifestyle changes alone may work where blood pressure is only mildly increased (Mild Hypertension).

Your lifestyle can be less healthy than you think. Making some simple changes can help lower your blood pressure:

- Quit smoking
- Eat a healthy balanced diet that is low in saturated fat and salt
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Drink less alcohol
- Increase your physical activity



**Around 50%**

of heart attacks and strokes are associated with high blood pressure.

**Are you at risk?  
Would you like help?**



**Blood Pressure Controlled**

More people are getting their blood pressure under control through lifestyle changes and/or medication.

**Are you being treated?  
Is it working?**



**Quit Smoking**

Every year – less and less people are smoking. People are 4 times more likely to quit with a stop smoking service.

**Do you smoke?  
Is it time to stop?**



**Healthy Weight**

Obese men are more than twice as likely to develop high blood pressure and obese women 3 times more likely. Maintaining a healthy weight and exercising reduces raised blood pressure and your risk of heart attack and stroke by up to half.

## Top tip for getting healthy

Set healthy goals with your family and friends – such as exercise three times a week or no sugary drinks - and encourage each other to stick to your goals.

Keeping a food diary is one of the best ways to improve your diet.

Check out the **One You** website for lots of other help and advice [www.nhs.uk/oneyou](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou)



# What are my options?

**1** Talk to your healthcare professional about **what lifestyle changes you want to make**. If your hypertension is mild, then this could be enough to make a difference.

**Advantages:**

- You'll feel healthier and fitter
- It's rewarding to make lifestyle changes
- Living a healthier lifestyle will reduce your risk of other health problems

**Disadvantages:**

- If you stick to lifestyle changes, but your blood pressure is still high, you won't have lowered your chance of a stroke or heart attack

**2** **Discuss taking medication as well as making lifestyle changes**

- You can decide together with your healthcare professional which medicines are best for you
- Depending on how high your blood pressure is, you may need a number of medicines that work in different ways to lower your blood pressure
- You may need to take other medicines to control your blood pressure better

**Advantages:**

- Medicines can help to lower your blood pressure even more than lifestyle changes on their own
- Most medicines for blood pressure are taken once daily
- Your medicines will be regularly monitored

**Disadvantages:**

- You might get side effects from blood pressure medicines. Restarting the medicine at a lower dose or using an alternative medicine will often resolve the issue

**3** **Stay as you are**  
You are **twice more likely** to have a stroke or a heart attack if you don't control your blood pressure

You may be offered ongoing follow-up checks with your healthcare professional. This will allow you both to agree the best way to continually manage your blood pressure. When and how often will depend on your blood pressure results.

What should my target blood pressure be? This will depend on your age and other factors but less than 140/90mmHg is recommended.

My target blood pressure is below:

/

mmHg

e.g. 140/90mmHg

Further information about blood pressure is available on the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Healthy Hearts blood pressure information website: [www.westyorkshireandharrogatehealthyhearts.co.uk/blood-pressure](http://www.westyorkshireandharrogatehealthyhearts.co.uk/blood-pressure)

You may wish to think about questions to ask your healthcare professional after reading this leaflet.