

Information about

Managing low blood pressure

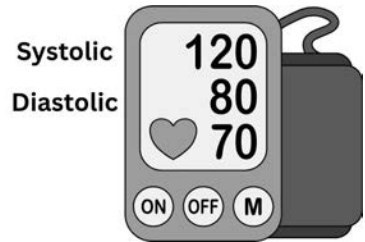


What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is the force your heart uses to move oxygen rich blood from your heart to all areas of your body through your blood vessels.

It is recorded as two numbers:

- Systolic (the top number) – the pressure when your heart contracts and pumps blood.
- Diastolic (the bottom number) – the pressure when your heart relaxes between beats.



Blood pressure is measured in units called millimeters of mercury (mmHg)

A typical healthy reading is approximately 120/80mmHg, although this can vary with age and individual factors.

What is low blood pressure?

Low blood pressure is called hypotension. Generally low blood pressure is considered to be:

- Systolic less than 90 mmHg
- Diastolic less than 60 mmHg

Many people naturally have lower blood pressure without any symptoms, but for some, it can cause problems.

What causes low blood pressure?

Low blood pressure can be due to several factors including:

- Certain medications
- Alcohol consumption
- Medical conditions e.g. diabetes
- Cancer treatments e.g. chemotherapy
- Age-related changes
- Dehydration
- Anaemia
- Loss of physical fitness or muscle mass
- Prolonged standing
- Pregnancy

What are the symptoms of low blood pressure?

Many people with low blood pressure will have no symptoms and will feel well.

When people do experience symptoms, they result from not having enough blood pumped up to the brain and include:

- Light-headedness or dizziness
- Feeling faint
- Feeling sick or nausea
- Blurred vision



What can I do to manage low blood pressure?

- Stay well hydrated – drink plenty of fluids
- Avoid alcohol
- Exercise regularly – this helps maintain fitness and muscle tone
- Avoid standing for long periods of time
- Eat small, frequent meals – helps prevent drops in blood pressure after eating
- Review your medications- speak with your doctor to check your medications are not causing side effects.



Medications to raise blood pressure are rarely needed. Most people improve with simple lifestyle changes or by treating the underlying cause.

Full length compression stockings may help - speak to your doctor to see if these are right for you.