



# High Blood Pressure FAQs

## Why don't I have symptoms?

High blood pressure is a fairly symptomless condition. Many people think they'll know if they have high blood pressure if they feel nervous, sweat a lot, have trouble sleeping, or have facial flushing, nosebleeds, or headaches.<sup>1</sup> None of these are a real symptom of high blood pressure. The only way you would know for sure is by getting a blood pressure measurement.

## If I can't feel high blood pressure, is it really a problem?

Yes. High blood pressure affects every system in your body, starting with your arteries. Healthy arteries are able to stretch to allow blood to flow easily. Over time, the continued force of the blood on the arteries causes them to stretch beyond healthy limits, causing damage. The problems of too much force range from weakening and scarring of the blood vessels to organ damage caused by lack of oxygen due to narrow arteries restricting blood flow.<sup>2</sup>



## What's the difference between blood pressure and heart rate?

Heart rate is the number of times your heart beats each minute. Blood pressure is the force of the blood in your arteries as your heart pumps blood through your body. Measuring your heart rate doesn't tell you anything about your blood pressure. During exercise, your heart rate may go up, but that doesn't mean your blood pressure goes up, too. The only way to tell if your blood pressure is high is to take a reading.<sup>3</sup>

## If my blood pressure readings are lower for a while, can I stop taking my medicine?

No. High blood pressure can be a lifelong condition. Your doctor is your best source for information on the right treatment plan for you, including how long you need to take your medicine. Don't stop taking your blood pressure medicine unless your doctor tells you to. Record your readings every day using a blood pressure tracker and bring them to your appointment so your doctor can see how you're doing.



**References:** 1. American Heart Association. What are the symptoms of high blood pressure? [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/SymptomsDiagnosisMonitoringofHighBloodPressure/What-are-the-Symptoms-of-High-Blood-Pressure\\_UCM\\_301871\\_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/SymptomsDiagnosisMonitoringofHighBloodPressure/What-are-the-Symptoms-of-High-Blood-Pressure_UCM_301871_Article.jsp). Updated March 11, 2015. Accessed March 19, 2015. 2. American Heart Association. What is high blood pressure? [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/AboutHighBloodPressure/What-is-High-Blood-Pressure\\_UCM\\_301759\\_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/AboutHighBloodPressure/What-is-High-Blood-Pressure_UCM_301759_Article.jsp). Updated September 4, 2014. Accessed March 19, 2015. 3. American Heart Association. Blood pressure vs. heart rate. [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/AboutHighBloodPressure/Blood-Pressure-vs-Heart-Rate\\_UCM\\_301804\\_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/AboutHighBloodPressure/Blood-Pressure-vs-Heart-Rate_UCM_301804_Article.jsp). Updated September 4, 2014. Accessed March 19, 2015.

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