Arrhythmia Alliance
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Understanding your Blood Pressure

What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is a measure of the force that your heart uses to pump blood around your body. Changes in blood pressure can be a contributing factor to arrhythmias and with an increase in the use of home blood pressure monitors, patients frequently ask if their blood pressure results are "normal", or if they should contact their doctor for a follow up. This easy-to-follow guide is designed to give an indication on whether you should seek further medical advice.

What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure readings have two numbers. The higher number is your **systolic pressure** - when your heart beats and pushes blood around the body. The lower number is your **diastolic pressure** - when your heart rests between beats.

Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg). For example, if your blood pressure is "140 over 90" or 140/90mmHg, it means you have a systolic pressure of 140mmHg and a diastolic pressure of 90mmHg.

It can be difficult to get an accurate blood pressure reading when in Atrial Fibrillation (AFib). For this reason, it is advisable to take three readings and then take an average from all three.

As a general guide:

- An ideal blood pressure is between 90/60mmHg and 120/80mmHg
- High blood pressure is considered to be 140/90mmHg or higher
- Low blood pressure is considered to be 90/60mmHg or lower

Treating low blood pressure (Hypotension)

If your doctor feels that there is an underlying reason for your low blood pressure, they will be able to offer the most appropriate treatment option for you. The treatment will vary on an individual basis, depending on symptoms and why the individual may be experiencing hypotension.

Treating high blood pressure (Hypertension)

By making some changes to your diet and increasing your physical activity, it can help to improve your blood pressure, however, you may still require medication to reduce it further. There is a wide range of blood pressure medications available. Your doctor will be able to advise which medication is the most appropriate treatment option for you.

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic (Higher number)	Diastolic (Lower number)
Low Blood Pressure	<90	<60
Normal	<120 and	<80
Pre-hypertension	120 - 139 or	80 - 89
High Blood Pressure (Stage 1)	140 - 159 or	90 - 99
High Blood Pressure (Stage 2)	160> or	100>
Hypertensive (Urgent care required)	180>	110>

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If you have any questions or would like further information please email **info-us@heartrhythmalliance.org**

Understanding your blood pressure - Patient information