

# Blood pressure awareness week

drinkaware **at work**



Every September, Blood Pressure UK run Know Your Numbers Week! to highlight that around a third of people in the UK have high blood pressure and most don't know it.

High blood pressure often doesn't have any symptoms so the only way to find out whether you have high blood pressure is to get it checked.

## What does a blood pressure reading look like?

An ideal blood pressure is under 120/80mmhg.

The first, or top number is the systolic blood pressure. This is the highest level your blood pressure reaches when your heart beats, forcing blood around your body.

The second, or bottom number, is the lowest level your blood pressure reaches as your heart relaxes between beats.<sup>(1)</sup>



## What causes high blood pressure?

There isn't always a clear explanation as to why someone's blood pressure is high. However, there are several factors that can play a part in increasing the risks of developing hypertension, including:

- Regularly drinking alcohol above the low-risk guidelines
- Not doing enough exercise
- Being overweight
- A family history of high blood pressure
- Consuming too much salt



## How much is too much?

The UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) low risk drinking guidelines advise that people should not drink more than 14 units a week to keep health risks from alcohol low. If you do choose to drink, it is best to spread your drinks throughout the week with several drink free days and no bingeing.



## To lower your blood pressure, you should:

- Cut down on alcohol
- Exercise regularly
- Lose weight, if you are overweight
- Eat a healthy diet, including reducing your salt intake



## Tips on how to cut back on alcohol.

Cutting back might be easier than you think by swapping some of your usual alcoholic drinks to non-alcoholic options. Or you could try permanently switching to a lower alcohol alternative as a sustainable way of cutting down in the long term.

A great way to keep track of your drinking and check if you are drinking too much is to download our [MyDrinkaware app](#).

Introduce some drink free days into your week too! **Pick a fun activity and enjoy a drink free day.**



# References

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<sup>(1)</sup> <https://www.bloodpressureuk.org/your-blood-pressure/understanding-your-blood-pressure/what-do-the-numbers-mean/>