

Low blood pressure (hypotension)

Blood pressure is a measure of the force that your heart uses to pump blood around your body.

Low blood pressure is when the blood pressure in your arteries is abnormally low.

Symptoms

Low blood pressure does not always cause symptoms, but you may need treatment if it does.

Get your blood pressure checked if you keep getting symptoms such as:

- lightheadedness or dizziness
- feeling sick
- blurred vision
- generally feeling weak
- confusion
- fainting

This may mean your blood pressure is too low.

You may get symptoms when you stand up or suddenly change position. If you do, you may have postural hypotension. This is when blood pressure falls when you suddenly stand up from a lying or sitting position.

Causes

Your blood pressure can vary depending on the time of day. It gradually increases throughout the day. What you're doing and how you're feeling can also affect it.

There are many possible causes of low blood pressure. It may be because you're fit and healthy, or you may have inherited it - passed down from your parents.

Some people develop low blood pressure as they get older.

You can also develop it by:

- being pregnant
- having some medical conditions, such as [diabetes](#)

- having some types of medication

How to check your blood pressure

You can check your blood pressure:

- by asking if your pharmacist can do it
- by asking your practice nurse or GP to do it
- at home yourself using a home blood pressure monitor - talk to your GP about home monitors

Low blood pressure is a measurement of 90/60mmHg or lower.

The first number is the highest pressure when your heart beats and pumps blood around your body. The second number is the lowest pressure when your heart relaxes between beats.

See a GP if you have low blood pressure and keep getting symptoms such as dizziness.

ⓘ Important

If you're 40 to 74 years old, you should have your blood pressure checked at least once every 5 years.

Treatment

Treatment for low blood pressure depends on the cause.

If your GP knows the cause, they can recommend treatment to ease your symptoms.

They may suggest:

- changing medication or altering your dose, if medication is the cause
- wearing support stockings – this can improve circulation and increase blood pressure

Medication to increase blood pressure is rarely needed. Simple lifestyle measures or treating the cause usually works.

Self-management

How to ease low blood pressure symptoms yourself:

- Get up slowly from sitting to standing - do not sit or stand for long periods.
- Do not bend down or change posture suddenly.
- Take care when getting out of bed – move slowly from lying to sitting to standing.
- Raise the head of your bed by about 15cm (6 inches) with bricks or heavy books.
- Eat small, frequent meals – lying down or sitting still for a while after eating may also help.

- Increase the amount of water you drink.
- Do not drink caffeinated drinks at night or drink too much alcohol.

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