

Diastolic Blood Pressure and Its Significance

Present blood pressure guidelines, defines ideal blood pressure reading as less than 120 /80 mm of Mercury and there are studies suggesting even lower systolic blood pressure (First number in the reading) may help to prevent even more heart attacks and strokes, as long as this low readings does not cause side effects like dizziness or lightheadedness.

However, the diastolic blood pressure (the lower number in your blood pressure reading), lower is not necessarily better.

Normal versus abnormal diastolic value: NORMAL: 60-79 Elevated BP: Less than 80(with Systolic BP 120-129 Hypertension stage 1: 80-89 Hypertension stage 2: >90 Hypotension(low BP): < 60.

Studies have suggested that very low diastolic blood pressure, less than 60 mmHg is associated with an increased risk of heart attack and stroke in people at high cardiovascular risk. In general, we tend to focus more on systolic blood pressure, which reflects the amount of pressure in the arteries as the heart contracts and pumps out blood to the body.

On the other hand, diastolic pressure is measured as the heart relaxes. It reflects the amount of blood flowing into the arteries, supplying the heart muscles. Therefore this diastolic blood pressure is often refers to as coronary perfusion pressure. Diastolic blood pressure is a function of arterial tone and resistance- that is how stiff or relaxed your blood vessels are.

EFFECT OF DIASTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE ON HEART: As mentioned above, coronary artery perfusion occur predominantly during diastole. If you have blockage in the coronary arteries, pressure beyond the constricted artery will fall even lower as blood flows through the narrowed channels.

That is the reason why too low diastolic blood pressure is not recommended, since this may compromise blood flow to the heart muscles and compromise heart function

According to a study published in JAMA, people with diastolic values below 60 mmHg had higher rates of heart attacks, strokes, and death from any cause. Those with diastolic values between 70 and 80, had the lowest risk for those outcomes. So it is recommended that ideal diastolic blood pressure reading is between 70 and 80 mm of Mercury.

Off note is the fact that, all the available blood pressure medications lower both systolic and diastolic blood pressure

MEDICATIONS FOR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE: Regarding treatment of high blood pressure, everyone is different. Your doctor will consider your individual situations, which includes any other health considerations, sensitivity to the medications and likelihood of developing dizziness or other side effects.

The goal is to lower your systolic blood pressure to below 130 to reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke without triggering, dizziness, lightheadedness, or fainting.

In general, systolic blood pressure tends to arise with age and diastolic blood pressure tends to fall. Sometimes, when diastolic blood pressure dips below 60, the systolic pressure is around 90 or 100. If that is the case, reducing the blood pressure medication makes sense.

On the other hand if your systolic blood pressure is well controlled and your diastolic blood pressure is below 60, your doctor may listen to your heart carefully to make sure that your aortic valve is not leaking. Leaking aortic valve called AORTIC REGURGITATION, is one of the reason why some people may have low diastolic blood.

On the other hand, if your aortic valve is normal, and you do physical activity without any symptoms, such as chest pain or shortness of breath or lightheadedness, a low diastolic blood pressure should not pose a problem.

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