# What is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of the blood as it flows through the arteries - the blood vessels that carry oxygenated blood to the organs, head, arms, and legs.

Blood pressure is measured according to the highest and lowest forces which are called "systolic" and "diastolic."

Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg).

Systolic pressure is the highest number.

Diastolic is the lowest number.

When written, systolic is the top number, and diastolic is the number on the bottom.

"Normal" blood pressure is generally below $\frac{120}{80}$

Experts believe that high blood pressure is generally above 140 for the systolic and above 90 for the diastolic.

Elevated blood pressure is commonly called "hypertension." $\frac{140}{90}$

Office of Environment, Safety and Health
POC: Claudia Beach, 301-903-9826 or
Claudia.Beach@eh.doe.gov
Brittany Broomfield, 301-586-0043 or
brittany.broomfield@eh.doe.gov