Blood pressure is a measure of how hard your blood pushes against your arteries as it moves through your body.

45.6% of American adults will have stage 1 or stage 2 hypertension.

WARNING!
Over time elevated or high blood pressure weakens your heart, blood vessels and kidneys, and makes a stroke or heart attack much more likely.

**LIFESTYLE CHANGES**

Follow the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet which includes whole grains, fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products and skims on saturated fat and cholesterol to lower your blood pressure by up to 11 mm Hg if you have high blood pressure.

**Blood pressure is:**
- **Normal**
  - Systolic: Less than 120
  - Diastolic: Less than 80
- **Elevated**
  - Systolic: 120–129
  - Diastolic: Less than 80
- **High blood pressure, stage 1**
  - Systolic: 130–139
  - Diastolic: 80–89
- **High blood pressure, stage 2**
  - Systolic: 140 or above
  - Diastolic: 90 or above

**Fitness**
Regular physical activity — about 30 minutes most days of the week — can lower your blood pressure by about 5 to 8 mm Hg if you have high blood pressure.

**Waistline measurement matters**
- **Men** are at risk if waist is > 40 inches
- **Women** are at risk if waist > 35 inches

**Caffeine Sensitive**
Check your pressure within 30 minutes of drinking a caffeinated beverage. If your blood pressure increases by 5 to 10 mm Hg, you may want to reduce or eliminate caffeine in your diet.

**Alcohol**
By drinking alcohol only in moderation — generally one drink a day for women, or two a day for men — you can potentially lower your blood pressure by about 4 mm Hg. One drink equals 12 ounces of beer, five ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof liquor.

**Sodium**
In general, limit sodium to 2,300 milligrams (mg) a day or less. However, a lower sodium intake — 1,500 mg a day or less — is ideal for most adults.

Sources: American College of Cardiology | American Heart Association | Mayoclinic.org