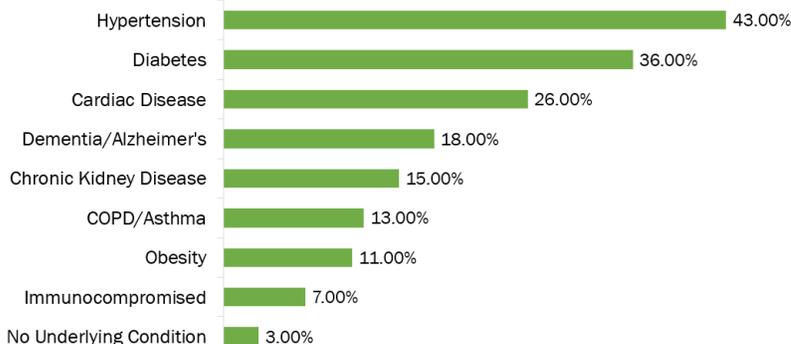


High Blood Pressure and COVID-19

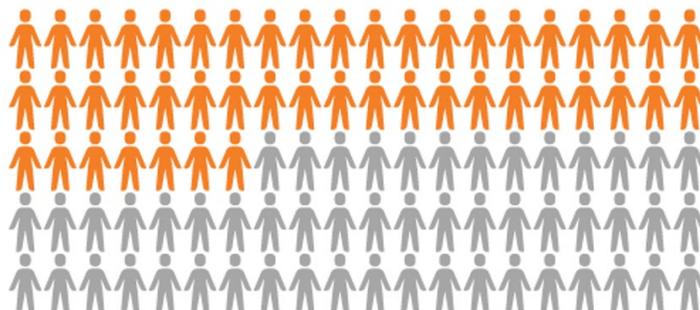
High blood pressure (HBP), also referred to as hypertension, may increase your risk of severe complications from COVID-19 infection. Learn how to [Love Your Heart](#)¹ to protect yourself against COVID-19 while also managing your blood pressure to stay healthy.

High Blood Pressure is a common disease that develops when your blood pressure, the force of blood flowing through your blood vessels, is consistently too high.

2020 - 2022 Common Underlying Conditions, COVID-19-associated Deaths



47% of U.S. Adults had HBP between 2015 - 2018



Source: [COVID-19 Watch Weekly Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Surveillance Report](#)² Updated every Wednesday. Data as of January 19, 2022

Source: [2021 Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Update Fact Sheet: At-a-Glance](#)³

High Blood Pressure is the most common underlying condition identified in San Diego County's COVID-19-associated deaths.

The Facts About High Blood Pressure (HBP)



About [1 in 3](#)⁴ U.S. adults with HBP are not even aware they have it as HBP often has no symptoms causing it to go untreated. In fact, that is why it is important to have your blood pressure checked at least once a year.

HBP is a medical condition that may increase the risk for severe COVID-19. The risk for developing HBP increases with age, poor lifestyle habits (e.g., lack of physical activity and smoking), and certain [underlying conditions](#).⁵



If you have HBP and/or other [underlying condition\(s\)](#),⁵ it is critical to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [recommendations](#)⁶ listed below to reduce the risk of infection. To help care for your heart health and prevent the spread of severe COVID-19 infection to protect yourself, your family, and your community:

- Get vaccinated or boosted, if eligible.
- Wear a mask.
- Stay 6 feet away from others.
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer, if soap and water are not available.

Learn more about:

COVID-19 at coronavirus-sd.com
Heart health at LoveYourHeartSD.org





Understanding Blood Pressure Readings

The first step to managing blood pressure is to have your blood pressure checked.

Once you know your numbers, it is important to [understand what they mean](#)⁷ and what is considered normal, elevated, high blood pressure (HBP), also referred to as hypertension, and hypertensive crisis.

If your numbers are anything but normal, follow-up with your doctor.

Know Your Numbers

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic MM HG (Upper Number)		Diastolic MM HG (Lower Number)
Normal	Lower than 120	and	Lower than 80
Elevated Blood Pressure	120-129	and	80
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1	130-139	or	80-89
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2	140 or higher	or	90 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis (Consult doctor immediately)	Higher than 180	and/or	Higher than 120

Note: A diagnosis of HBP must be confirmed with a medical professional. A doctor should also evaluate any unusually low blood pressure readings.

How to Manage Blood Pressure and Stay Healthy

Eat Smart: Adapt Dietary Approaches to Stop HBP ([DASH eating plan](#)).⁸ This plan recommends eating fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and fat-free or low-fat dairy products.

Manage Stress: Too much [stress](#)⁹ can encourage behaviors that increase blood pressure, such as poor diet, physical inactivity, and using tobacco or drinking alcohol more than usual. Too much stress can encourage behaviors that increase blood pressure. Consider meditation or yoga to reduce unhealthy behaviors such as physical inactivity.

Move More: Regular [physical activity](#)¹⁰ makes your heart stronger. A stronger heart can pump more blood with less effort. As a result, the force on your arteries decreases, lowering your blood pressure.

Manage Weight: Being [overweight](#)¹¹ puts extra strain on your heart, increasing the risk for developing HBP and damaging your blood vessels. Slight weight loss can reduce HBP and reduce the strain on your heart.

Don't Smoke: Every time you smoke, vape, or use [tobacco](#),¹² the nicotine can cause a temporary increase in blood pressure. Within one year after quitting, your risk of heart disease goes down by half.

Take Your Medication Properly: [HBP medication](#)¹³ only works when you take it as prescribed. If prescribed to you, continue to take HBP medications as instructed according to your prescribing health care provider. Take your medications at the same time, every day.

Learn more about:

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