

Why Knowing Your Blood Pressure (BP) Matters

High Blood Pressure/Hypertension

- **Early Detection of a "Silent Killer":** Hypertension often has no symptoms until major damage is done, such as damage to blood vessels in the brain and kidneys.
- **Preventing Serious Diseases:** High BP is the primary risk factor for stroke and a major factor in heart disease, dementia, and kidney disease.
- **Monitoring Treatment Effectiveness:** If you are diagnosed, regular checking helps determine if lifestyle changes (diet, exercise) or medications are working.
- **Avoiding "White Coat" Hypertension:** Self-monitoring at home can determine if your blood pressure is only high in a doctor's office due to anxiety, or high all the time.

Low Blood Pressure/Hypotension

- **Dizziness or lightheadedness:** Especially when standing up quickly
- **Fainting (syncope):** A sudden, temporary loss of consciousness.
- **Blurred or faded vision.**
- **Fatigue, weakness, or lethargy**
- **Nausea or vomiting.**
- **Confusion or lack of concentration.**
- **Cold, clammy, or pale skin.**
- **Rapid, shallow breathing.**

Serious Complications and Risks

- **Falls and Injuries:** Dizziness and fainting can lead to dangerous falls, particularly in older adults, resulting in broken hips or spine fractures.
- **Shock:** A sudden, severe drop in blood pressure can cause organs to starve for oxygen, leading to life-threatening shock.
- **Organ Damage:** Chronic or severe low blood pressure can damage the brain, heart, and other organs due to insufficient blood flow

When to Check

- **Regularly:** It is important to have your blood pressure checked at least annually as risk increases with age or more frequently if you have been diagnosed with **hypertension** (high bp) OR **hypotension** (low bp)

Knowing your numbers allows you to manage it and prevent severe, life-altering complications.