

PLEASE KNOW YOUR NUMBERS



Be more physically active
Don't use tobacco products
Eat healthy foods



Your cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar and body mass index numbers are key indicators of your risk for major illness. If you know these numbers, you can take action to reduce your chances of developing heart disease, diabetes, and other major chronic illnesses. Take some basic steps to control your own health.

1. Cholesterol: Target Below 200.

A sudden heart attack may not be "sudden" at all, but be caused by years of living with high cholesterol and extra fats stored by the body. The normal range for total cholesterol is 200 or less.

You also need to know your "healthy" HDL cholesterol and "lousy" LDL cholesterol numbers. High total cholesterol, high LDL, or low HDL means you need to take immediate action to prevent a possible heart attack or stroke. There are no definite symptoms of high cholesterol. That's why it's important to see your health care provider and know your cholesterol numbers.

2. Blood Pressure: Target Less Than 120 over 80.

Blood pressure measures the amount of force it takes your heart to pump blood through your body. High blood pressure (or "hypertension") increases your risk of heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease. High blood pressure damages your brain, eyes and arteries, too.

You may have no symptoms of high blood pressure. About 60% of all Americans more than 60 years old have high blood pressure. Anyone can have high blood pressure. Check with your health care provider---ask what your blood pressure numbers are.

Start something good!

**Take a short walk around the
neighborhood.**

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Education

3. Blood Sugar: Target Between 80 and 120.

Glucose is sugar stored in the blood as your body's main source of energy. If your glucose is too high or too low, you may have diabetes. The average blood sugar range is between 80 and 120.

Diabetes can strike anyone of any age. Symptoms involve frequent urination, extreme hunger, thirst, unusual weight loss, increased fatigue, or blurry vision.

If you have been diagnosed with diabetes, you need to have your hemoglobin A1C number checked. Your A1C number tells you how well you're controlling your blood sugar over time. Your A1C should be less than 7. Left untreated, diabetes can lead to heart disease, blindness, amputation of arms or legs, and kidney disease.

So, take your first step to knowing your numbers....next time you go to your health care provider's office and someone takes your blood pressure, ask "what was it?"

Betty Long, RN, MHA - President and Founder - Guardian Nurses Healthcare Advocates.

You can take steps now to improve your health and life:

Control your weight and Know Your Numbers!

BMI and you . . .

4. Body Mass Index: Target Below 25.

Body mass index (BMI) measures your weight in relation to your height. It indicates your "fatness" and should be 25 or less. A BMI over 25 means you are overweight, and a number over 30 means you are obese. Extra weight can lead to high cholesterol, heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic illnesses. To check your BMI, [go to the National Heart, Blood and Lung Institute site](#) and follow the prompts. If your BMI is over 25, take action to control your weight.