



When blood pressure is low

High blood pressure gets a lot of attention. But low blood pressure can cause health problems as well.

If blood pressure is too low, your organs will not receive enough blood. This can quickly become dangerous. While a one-time low blood pressure reading is not usually concerning, a doctor should address chronic low blood pressure that occurs with other symptoms.



SYMPTOMS

The normal range for blood pressure is between 90/60 mm/Hg to 120/80 mm/Hg. However, some people naturally have lower blood pressure than others. Low blood pressure is a problem when accompanied by any of these symptoms:

- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Nausea or vomiting
- Blurry vision
- Confusion
- Fainting
- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Clammy, pale skin
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Sleepiness
- Depression



CAUSES

Low blood pressure can be a sign of a problem that needs to be addressed right away. Causes may include:

- Severe allergic reaction
- Sudden loss of blood volume due to dehydration, injury, or internal bleeding
- Septic shock caused by infection impacts the blood vessels causing blood pressure to drop
- Heart problems such as heart attack or changes in heart rhythm, which may prevent the heart from pumping blood efficiently
- Certain medications or substances can lower blood pressure
- Orthostatic hypotension which is temporary and happens when you change position quickly
- Endocrine or hormone imbalances



TREATMENT

If you have low blood pressure, your doctor is your best resource for treatment. Depending on the specific cause, treatment may include:

- Changing or switching medications if recommended by your doctor
- Drinking more fluids to stay well hydrated
- Moving slowly when going from sitting to standing
- Wearing compression socks to prevent blood from pooling in the legs
- Medicines to increase heart strength and improve blood pressure
- Avoiding alcohol
- In severe cases, receiving blood through an IV