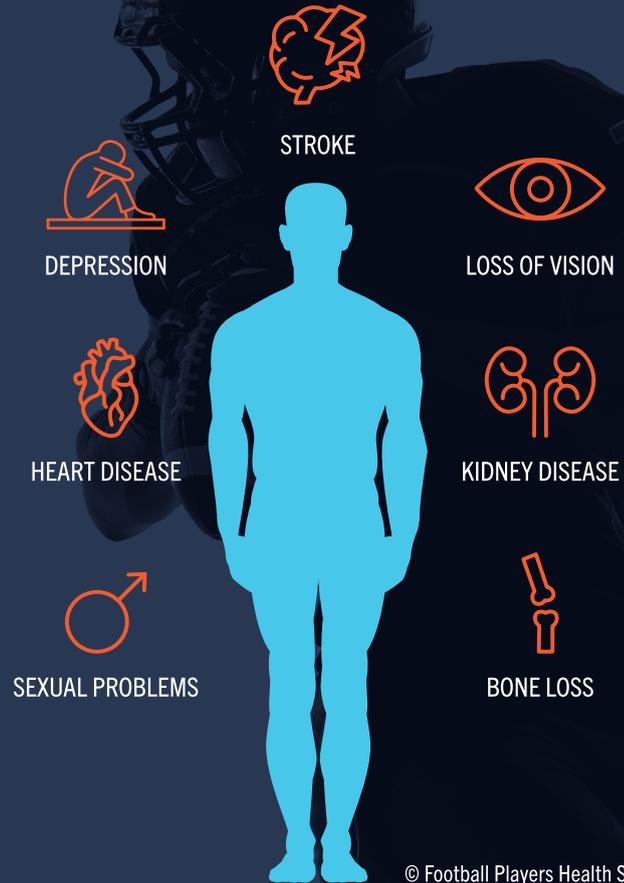


# Know your Over/Under

## Did you know?

When blood pressure is elevated over long periods, there's a risk of heart attack and stroke. You can also have challenges with thinking and memory. In fact, elevated blood pressure, also known as hypertension, can lead to many other health problems including kidney failure, loss of vision, and others. **The good news is that hypertension can be treated and managed to reduce these risks.**

Blood pressure is defined by two numbers that are shown as a fraction with one number over the other. The top number, your "over," is your systolic blood pressure which reflects the pressure in your arteries when your heart is pumping. The bottom number, your "under," is your diastolic blood pressure which is the pressure in your arteries when the heart is relaxed in between beats. **Knowing and monitoring your over/under sets you on the road to better health reducing the medical problems caused by hypertension.**



**THE FOOTBALL PLAYERS  
HEALTH STUDY**  
AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

# Managing Blood Pressure

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC MM HG (UPPER NUMBER)	AND/OR	DIASTOLIC MM HG (LOWER NUMBER)
Normal	Less than 120	and	Less than 80
Elevated	120 – 129	and	Less than 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 your doctor immediately)	Higher than 180	and/or	Higher than 120

**Smoking, weight gain, diabetes, growing older, experiencing discrimination, and self-identifying as Black are common risk factors for hypertension.** The Football Players Health Study has also been examining the impact of a football career on blood pressure. For example, we have found that those reporting high numbers of concussions during playing years were almost twice as likely to report high blood pressure post-career. These effects were especially true in players under forty.

## What does this mean for you as a former NFL player?

Managing blood pressure and addressing hypertension at any age can be protective against long-term heart and brain problems. Our results suggest that screening and proactive hypertension treatment, even in young former players, may reduce the risk of heart disease and issues with thinking and memory. **Former players who are concerned about brain or heart health are encouraged to have their blood pressure checked and managed by a healthcare provider.**

