

## Increased dementia risk linked to high blood pressure during middle age

Controlling high blood pressure during middle age may help stave off dementia later in life.

In a long-term study, researchers monitored the blood pressure of thousands of participants five times over nearly three decades and then performed neurological tests. Having hypertension throughout one's mid-40s to mid-60s was associated with an [increased risk of dementia](#) later in life, compared with those with normal blood pressure, researchers report August 13 in JAMA.

Among study participants who had hypertension throughout midlife, there were 3.28 cases of dementia per 100 people per year, says Keenan Walker, a neuropsychologist at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Among those with normal blood pressure during middle age, there were 1.84 cases per 100 people per year.

"Hypertension is extremely common in the population and dementia is also growing in prevalence as the population ages," says vascular neurologist Shyam Prabhakaran of the University of Chicago, who wrote a [commentary accompanying the study](#).

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[Neuropsychologist Keenan] Walker says, "if you can reduce the amount of vascular dysfunction" by controlling blood pressure with medication, exercise or diet, it may be possible to delay or even prevent later dementia.

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