

[IMAGE]

Blood Pressure Meds: Is There a Better Option?

By Editorial Staff

High blood pressure is no laughing matter, but common BP-lowering medications may have their own problems. Untreated high blood pressure weakens arteries and stresses the heart, increasing the risk of heart attack or stroke, but two classes of blood pressure medications may increase the risk of depression, according to research published this month in the American Heart Association journal *Hypertension*.

Study results implicated beta blockers or calcium channel antagonists as problematic, with users twice as likely to be admitted into the hospital with a mood disorder, such as severe depression than patients taking angiotensin antagonists (ACE inhibitors).

medication - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark While the study found that users of ACE inhibitors actually had a lower risk of mood disorders, let's not overlook the fact that nondrug alternatives to medication are recommended in many cases. According to the American Heart Association, here's what you can do without drugs to reduce your risk:

- Eat a better diet, which may include reducing salt
- Enjoy regular physical activity
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Manage stress
- Avoid tobacco smoke
- Limit alcohol intake
- Understand hot tub safety

To learn more about high blood pressure and prevention techniques, visit www.heart.org. For help adopting the above and other heart-healthy lifestyle habits, talk to your doctor.

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