

[IMAGE]

High BP Is Bad for the Brain

By Editorial Staff

We're all trying to figure out the recipe for healthy aging, and brain health is tops on the list. After all, a sharp mind can still thrive, even if your body starts to break down; but if your mind deteriorates, what kind of a life can you enjoy? Unfortunately, too many people suffer cognitive decline as they age, affecting memory, problem-solving, decision-making and even the ability to understand language. As scientists work feverishly to find ways to treat or even prevent cognitive decline, particularly diseases such as Alzheimer's, they're also learning more about what we can do – while we're still younger *and* as we age – to keep our brains healthy for a lifetime.

One way, according to a new research review, involves keeping our blood pressure in the safe range. Published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the review analyzed numerous previous studies, all of which had evaluated the relationship between blood pressure and dementia or cognitive impairment; specifically, the impact of reducing blood pressure. Study participants were almost 70 years of age, on average, and average blood pressure at baseline was high: 154 (14.9) mm Hg over 83.3 mm Hg ("normal" BP for most adults is 130/80, regardless of age, according to the latest guidelines from the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology). Reducing blood pressure was "significantly associated with a lower risk of incident dementia or cognitive impairment."

While the studies in question utilized anti-hypertensive medication to lower blood pressure, in the vast majority of cases simple lifestyle adjustments involving diet and exercise can accomplish the same thing, both in terms of reducing BP and thus, reducing the risk of cognitive impairment. Now that's a win-win for brain health! Talk to your doctor to learn more.

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