

[IMAGE]

## Never Too Early to Check Your Blood Pressure

We've known for years that high blood pressure, or hypertension, increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases, such as heart disease and stroke. It is the most common cardiovascular condition in middle-aged and older individuals. But what are the effects of high blood pressure on young adults? A recent study in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* assessed the relationship between blood pressure and long-term deaths from heart and artery disease.

Researchers monitored almost 11,000 young men from age 18 to 39. Subjects with higher systolic blood pressure increased their risk of heart disease later in life by 26%; subjects with higher diastolic blood pressure showed a 17% risk increase. Higher-than-normal blood pressure was related to an increase in the death rate from cardiovascular disease as well. Some information on blood pressure:

- Systolic blood pressure (the pressure on the arteries as blood leaves the heart) is the higher number in a blood pressure reading.
- Diastolic pressure (the arterial pressure between beats, when the heart is at rest) is the lower number in a reading.
- Optimal blood pressure is less than 120/80. Borderline blood pressure is considered 130-139/ 85-89.

Exercising, not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, following a low-sodium diet, and not drinking alcohol excessively are the keys to keeping your blood pressure down at safe levels. Have your doctor monitor your blood pressure regularly. Additional information on health concerns can be accessed on line at <http://www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/general>.

### *Reference:*

Miura K, Daviglius ML, Dyer AR, et al. Relationship of blood pressure to 25-year mortality due to coronary heart disease, cardiovascular diseases, and all causes in young adult men. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, June 25, 2001: 161(12), pp. 1501-1508.

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