

[IMAGE]

## **Blood Pressure Responds to Weight Changes**

Do you realize you might be suffering from high blood pressure (hypertension) and not even know it? High blood pressure usually causes no symptoms until complications develop, such as a heart attack or a stroke < that's why it's referred to as the "silent killer." Exercise and dietary adjustments can usually keep this dangerous condition under control, and evidence suggests that weight loss and gain may also play a role.

A recent study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* tracked 82,473 U.S. female nurses from 1976-1992, calculating weight loss or gain every two years and noting all cases of physician-diagnosed high blood pressure. Results showed that weight gain dramatically increased the risk for high blood pressure, whereas long-term weight loss reduced the risk. These associations were stronger in younger women (less than 45 years of age) than older women (more than 55 years of age).

So what's the moral to this story? First, make sure you get your blood pressure checked regularly. The earlier you discover the problem, the faster you can start doing something about it. Second, avoid excess weight gain by maintaining an active lifestyle and following a sensible diet. And third, consult your doctor for more information.

### *Reference:*

Huang Z, Willett WC, Manson JE. Body weight, weight change, and risk for hypertension in women. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, January 1998: Vol. 128, No. 12, pp81-88.

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