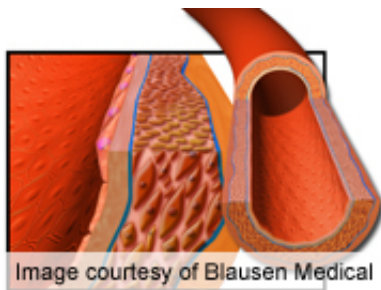


Early mediterranean diet benefits arteries in adulthood

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(HealthDay) -- Adherence to a Mediterranean dietary pattern in early life is associated with lower arterial stiffness in adulthood, according to a study published online July 19 in the *Journal of Internal Medicine*.

Roel J.J. van de Laar, from the Maastricht University Medical Centre in the Netherlands, and colleagues analyzed data from 373 healthy participants (196 women) in the Amsterdam Growth and Health [Longitudinal Study](#). Adherence to a Mediterranean [dietary pattern](#) (aMED score with the range of 0 to 9) was measured two to eight times between 13 and 36 years of age. The properties of carotid, brachial, and femoral arteries were measured using ultrasonography at 36 years of age.

The researchers found that individuals with stiffer carotid arteries (the most adverse tertile for the distensibility coefficient) had lower aMED scores and were less likely to have adhered to this diet (aMED score ≥ 5 ; odds ratio, 0.69) during the preceding 24 years, compared with those with less stiff arteries. In adolescence, differences in aMED scores were already present. Differences in aMED scores only partly explained the favorable associations between the Mediterranean diet and other cardiovascular disease risk factors (up to 26 percent), particularly mean blood pressure (up to 19 percent).

"Promoting the Mediterranean diet in adolescence and early adulthood may constitute an important means of preventing arterial stiffness in adulthood," the authors conclude.

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