

Healthy lifestyle reduces the risk of hypertension by two thirds

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Healthy behaviours regarding alcohol, physical activity, vegetable intake and body weight reduce the risk of hypertension by two thirds, according to research presented at the ESC Congress today. The findings were presented by Professor Pekka Jousilahti from National Institute for Health and Welfare.

According to the [World Health Organization](#), hypertension is the leading cause of mortality in the world, contributing annually to over 7 million deaths (about 15% of all deaths). Therefore, prevention of hypertension is essential to improving health and preventing morbidity and mortality, both in developing and developed countries.

The purpose of this study was to examine whether five major cardiovascular disease related [lifestyle factors](#) – smoking, [alcohol consumption](#), physical activity, obesity and consumption of vegetables – predict the future increase of blood pressure and development of clinical hypertension, and need for antihypertensive drug treatment.

This large prospective population-based cohort study included 9,637 Finnish men and 11,430 women who were 25 to 74 years of age and free of hypertension during the baseline measurements (1982-2002). Healthy lifestyle factors were defined as: (1) not smoking, (2) alcohol consumption less than 50g per week, (3) [leisure time](#) physical activity at least 3 times per week, (4) daily consumption of vegetables, and (5) normal weight (BMI

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