

High blood pressure during pregnancy may mean worse hot flashes during menopause

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Women with a history of high blood pressure disorders during pregnancy are more likely to experience bothersome menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes and night sweats, according to a study published Wednesday, Aug. 19, in *Menopause*.

"We already know that women with [high blood pressure](#) during pregnancy or those who experience menopause symptoms such as [hot flashes](#) and night sweats have a higher risk of developing heart disease. Our research discovered that women who experienced high blood pressure during pregnancy were much more likely to experience bothersome menopausal symptoms, including hot flashes and [night sweats](#) during menopause," says Stephanie Faubion, M.D., the study's lead author. Dr. Faubion is the Penny and Bill George Director for Mayo Clinic's Center for Women's Health.

Researchers analyzed the [medical records](#) of 2,684 women ages 40 to 65 who were seen for specialty menopause or sexual health consultations at women's [health clinics](#) at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale, Arizona, between May 2015 and September 2019. All study participants completed a questionnaire in which they self-reported their [menopause symptoms](#) and effects of these symptoms on their quality of life. Study participants also completed questionnaires that documented whether they experienced high blood pressure disorders during pregnancy, such as preeclampsia or gestational hypertension.

Researchers discovered a significant association between women with a history of high blood pressure disorders during pregnancy who reported more bothersome menopausal symptoms. Women with this high blood pressure history using hormone therapy also reported more menopausal symptoms, compared to women with no history of high blood pressure disorders during pregnancy.

Dr. Faubion says more research is needed to understand why there is a link between high blood pressure disorders during pregnancy and more severe menopausal symptoms. But one thing is clear: Physicians need to do a better job monitoring women who experience high blood pressuring during pregnancy after they give birth.

"We know medical providers have historically done a lousy job identifying and following women with histories of high blood pressure disorders during pregnancy, despite knowing that they have a higher heart disease risk," says Dr. Faubion. "This study is another reminder that these women are different. It is important that they not only receive education with regard to what they may experience during menopause, but also that they undergo routine screenings and counseling on how they can reduce their risk for [heart disease](#)."

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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