

The dangers of hypertension in young adults

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Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a significant risk factor for heart disease and other major health issues. A recent *JAMA* study shows a large number of Americans between the ages of 18 and 44 aren't even aware that they have high blood pressure. It stresses the importance of

regular blood pressure screening for all ages.

Hypertension can be a ticking time bomb in [young adults](#), according to Dr. Barbara Ruddy, a Mayo Clinic internal medicine physician.

"Many times, younger adults have no idea what their blood pressure is, and, so, people will come in and have a significantly elevated blood pressure that's probably been elevated for several years. So it is dangerous because although they may feel fine, down the road, it could cause them significant health issues," says Dr. Ruddy.

Those issues might include [heart disease](#), stroke, visual problems and kidney failure.

"They don't show up for some decades after the development of [high blood pressure](#), but they really do impact people's health in their later years," says Dr. Ruddy.

She encourages getting an accurate blood pressure reading from your health care provider.

"There's many ways to help normalize your blood pressure. You can do that through diet and lifestyle, but we also have many medications that are helpful to control high blood pressure," says Dr. Ruddy.

Eating a heart-healthy diet, limiting salt and alcohol intake, [regular physical activity](#), and maintaining a healthy weight are all ways to avoid hypertension.

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