

More data needed on lifestyle interventions for postpartum blood pressure control

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Hypertensive disorders of pregnancy such as preeclampsia and gestational hypertension occur in up to 10% of pregnancies and are associated with a three-fold increased risk of chronic hypertension and

up to two-fold increased risk of cardiovascular disease when compared with healthy pregnancies. While the year after pregnancy is a critical time to address hypertension risk with lifestyle changes (healthy diet and exercise), the effects of lifestyle interventions on postpartum blood pressures are not well documented.

A new Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine study has found that there are few relevant studies on the effects of lifestyle interventions on postpartum blood pressures. Of the nine relevant publications, none reported a significant intervention effect on blood pressure. However, most interventions were associated with improvements in other outcomes, such as weight loss.

The research team also found that Black women were underrepresented in studies—only one study included a majority of Black women—despite the fact that Black women are disproportionately affected by high blood pressure during and after pregnancy.

The study is published in the *Journal of Hypertension*.

More information: Mara E. Murray Horwitz et al, The effect of postpartum lifestyle interventions on blood pressure: a systematic literature review, *Journal of Hypertension* (2023). [DOI: 10.1097/HJH.0000000000003477](https://doi.org/10.1097/HJH.0000000000003477)

Provided by Boston University School of Medicine

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