

Hypertension in pregnancy poses measurable risks for babies, study finds

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Hypertension, or high blood pressure, occurs in more than 7% of pregnancies. A recent Mayo Clinic population-based study found that babies from pregnancies complicated by hypertension were more than

two times as likely to develop chronic hypertension as adults. The study supports the recognition of maternal history of hypertension as a potential cause of early-onset hypertension in their children.

"We studied the long-term effects of [hypertension](#) in [pregnancy](#) to quantify the risk of [chronic hypertension](#) that is passed on genetically to children," says Virginia Dines, M.D., a nephrologist and first author of the study, published in *Hypertension*.

Rochester Epidemiology Project records of 8,755 people born in the same community revealed that babies exposed to hypertension in the womb had a 50% increased risk of developing chronic hypertension later in life. Babies whose mothers had chronic hypertension before, during or after pregnancy had a 73% increased risk, while babies exposed to both factors had a 140% increased risk.

These findings build on earlier research, which found that the children of mothers with preeclampsia during pregnancy—a condition that can include [high blood pressure](#)—had an increased risk of stroke and other cardiometabolic disorders later in life

The researchers are actively studying the fetal origins of adult chronic hypertension to understand the underlying mechanisms and developmental origins of the condition. Their goal is to improve the diagnosis of hypertension in all people and to discover targeted therapies.

"Pediatricians should elicit this important history from the mothers of patients," says Vesna Garovic, M.D., Ph.D., a Mayo Clinic nephrologist and senior author.

In addition, she says, people born from hypertensive pregnancies may need more heart health monitoring and screening and should be provided

timely medical advice about diet, exercise and other lifestyle measures to reduce their risk.

More information: Virginia A. Dines et al, Risk of Adult Hypertension in Offspring From Pregnancies Complicated by Hypertension: Population-Based Estimates, *Hypertension* (2023). [DOI: 10.1161/HYPERTENSIONAHA.123.20282](https://doi.org/10.1161/HYPERTENSIONAHA.123.20282)

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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