

# Heart Disease is more likely in Women who have had Complications During Pregnancy

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## Editorial

Up to 50% of women experience high blood pressure before they reach the age of 60, but the symptoms, such as hot flushes and palpitations, are often due to menopause. A recent research claims that risks during pregnancy and early menopause increase women's potential risk of heart disease. The results were published in the journal 'European Heart Journal.' In the research, cardiologists, gynaecologists, and endocrinologists provided advice on how to help middle-aged women avoid future heart problems. The study concluded that "physicians could increase their detection of hypertension in middle-aged women."

Up to half of all women experience high blood pressure before they reach the age of 60, but the signs, such as hot flushes and palpitations, are often misattributed to menopause. "In men, elevated blood pressure is known as hypertension; however, in women, it is often mislabeled as 'stress' or 'menopausal symptoms.'" We know that women's blood pressure is handled differently than men's, placing them at risk for atrial fibrillation, heart failure, and stroke - all of which could have been prevented. Women who have a normal (non-surgical) menopause before the age of 40 are also more likely to experience cardiovascular disease, with each year increasing their risk by 3%. Women are more likely than men to develop autoimmune inflammatory disorders like rheumatoid arthritis and lupus, which raise cardiovascular risk around menopause. High blood pressure during pregnancy is a precursor to hypertension occurring after menopause, and it's related to dementia decades later. Women in their 40s and 50s who do not treat their blood pressure will face complications in their 70s, when hypertension is more difficult to treat.

The value of a balanced lifestyle and diet is recognised - for example, in the effective treatment of menopausal health and in women with PCOS, who have an increased risk of high blood pressure during pregnancy and type 2 diabetes. Although menopausal hormone therapy is prescribed for women over 45 to relieve symptoms such as night sweats and hot flushes, I suggest that cardiovascular risk factors be evaluated before beginning. Women with a high cardiovascular risk or who have had a stroke, heart attack, or blood clot should avoid therapy. While noting that "the psychosocial benefits of hormone therapy with an improved body image can result in healthier lifestyle choices," the study stated that transgender people "should always be encouraged to reduce modifiable lifestyle risks."

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