



How does body weight affect hypertension?

Studies have shown that body weight, changes in body weight over time, and skinfold thickness are related to changes in blood pressure levels. These factors have been linked to the subsequent rise and development of high blood pressure. People who are overweight are more likely to have high-normal to mild high blood pressure. About one-third of patients with high blood pressure are overweight. Even moderately obese adults have double the risk of hypertension than people with normal weights. In fact, the increase in blood pressure in aging Americans may be due primarily to weight gain.

(In other cultures old age does not necessarily coincide with weight gain or high blood pressure.) Children and adolescents who are obese are at greater risk for high blood pressure when they reach adulthood.

Statistics show that most people who have high blood pressure are also overweight. If you are overweight or have gained weight over time, you'll be advised to cut down on calories and lose weight. Your doctor can prescribe a diet that's right for you. If you're given a diet, follow it closely, including any recommendations about reducing your consumption of alcohol. Alcoholic drinks are high in non-nutritious calories, so if you're trying to lose weight, avoid alcoholic beverages. Often when people lose weight, their blood pressure drops as well.

Thin people with hypertension are at higher risk for heart attacks and stroke than obese people with high blood pressure. Experts surmise that thin people with hypertension are likely to have conditions such as an enlarged heart or stiff arteries that cause the high blood pressure and also pose greater dangers to health. Low birth weight, particularly in females, has been associated with high blood pressure in both childhood and adulthood. Low-birth weight is also associated with subsequent obesity, a major contributor to hypertension.

<http://mens-health.health-cares.net/hypertension-weight.php>