

## Adult Hypertension Can Be Identified In Childhood



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New research from New Zealand's University of Otago suggests people at risk of high blood pressure and other related health issues by age 38 can be identified in childhood. The research is published in the journal *Hypertension*.

High blood pressure, often described as the silent killer, is generally treated around middle or old age since most people remain unaware that they suffer from this condition. This particular study tracked over a 1000 people born in 1972-3 to date. They collected blood pressure information between the ages of 7 to 38 years and categorised study participants into four different blood pressure groups.

Their analysis showed that over a third of the study members were at risk of developing high blood pressure by early mid-life. The researchers also identified factors in early life that could potentially increase the odds of being at risk of developing high blood pressure in middle-age. These factors include being male, having a family history of high blood pressure, being first born or being born with low birthweight. Having a higher body mass index and smoking is also associated with increasing blood pressure levels.

Dunedin Study Director, Professor Richie Poulton, says "encouraging lifestyle changes beginning early in life that include the maintenance of a healthy body weight, weight reduction and stopping smoking may help to lower blood pressure levels over time, particularly among those individuals on a trajectory to developing hypertension".

Lead author Dr Reremoana Theodore says that these findings can play an important role in early detection, targeted prevention and/or intervention of hypertension and can help reduce the burden associated with this silent killer.

Source: [University of Otago](#)

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