

Women who develop high blood pressure after birth at greater risk of chronic hypertension

January 29 2021



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Blood pressure that remains elevated over of time—known as chronic hypertension—has been linked to heart disease, which is the leading cause of death in the United States. Recent research has shown that

persistent high blood pressure may also increase the risk for stroke and overall mortality. Yet, only about 1 in 4 adults with chronic hypertension have their condition under control, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In a new study to be presented today at the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine's (SMFM) [annual meeting](#), The Pregnancy Meeting, researchers from the University of Pittsburgh will unveil findings that suggest that women who develop high [blood pressure](#) during pregnancy and who continue to have elevated blood pressure postpartum are at an [increased risk](#) for developing [chronic hypertension](#).

The study looked at 368 women who had normal blood pressure during pregnancy and followed them for six to 18 months after delivery. For six weeks following childbirth, women took their blood pressure at home using a remote monitoring system connected to their smart phones. A total of 5,958 blood pressure readings were collected.

Results found that at their first postpartum visit, nearly half of the women (49.5 percent or 182) had developed [high blood pressure](#). These women had a slower decline in blood pressure in the first six weeks following delivery and higher blood pressure at their postpartum visit compared to the remaining women (50.5 percent or 186) who did not develop high blood pressure.

"By leveraging data from our widely scaled postpartum hypertension remote monitoring program, we were able to discover that a woman's blood pressure in the first six weeks after childbirth appears to be an important indicator of whether she is likely to develop chronic hypertension six to 18 months later," said one of the study's lead authors, Eesha Dave, MD, a [resident physician](#) in obstetrics and gynecology at UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital in Pittsburgh.

"This information helps us to better identify women who may be at risk of developing cardiovascular problems later in life and take preventative steps," said another one of the study's lead authors, Alisse Hauspurg, MD, a maternal-fetal medicine subspecialist and assistant professor at University of Pittsburgh.

Provided by Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine

Citation: Women who develop high blood pressure after birth at greater risk of chronic hypertension (2021, January 29) retrieved 3 July 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-01-women-high-blood-pressure-birth.html>

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