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Premature Menopause Is a High Blood Pressure Risk Factor

Large-scale study results call for earlier cardiovascular screening for women who experience menopause before age 40

CLEVELAND, Ohio (July 29, 2026)—Women who reach menopause before age 40 face a meaningfully higher risk of developing high blood pressure than those who go through menopause after age 45, according to a new study of more than 107,000 women. Risk peaked among women who reached menopause prematurely between the ages of 25 and 35 years. The results of the study are published online today in *Menopause*, the journal of The Menopause Society.

Hormone shifts during the menopause transition are known to influence a woman's overall disease risk, and earlier menopause has previously been linked to higher rates of coronary heart disease and stroke. However, evidence connecting the timing of menopause directly to hypertension has been inconsistent, with some prior meta-analyses finding an association and others finding none.

A key challenge has been separating the direct hormone effects of menopause from indirect effects driven by weight gain, metabolic changes, and other cardiovascular risk factors that tend to accompany the menopause transition.

To address this gap, researchers analyzed data from 107,836 postmenopausal women enrolled in the UK Biobank between 2006 and 2010, following them for a median of nearly 15 years through the end of 2023. The study classified women by age at menopause—normal (after age 45), early (ages 40 to 45), and premature (before age 40)—as well as by type of menopause (natural vs surgical) and tracked new diagnoses of high blood pressure over time.

Over the follow-up period, 18,508 women (17.2%) were diagnosed with hypertension. The risk climbed steadily as age at menopause dropped: 16.6% of women with normal age at menopause developed hypertension, compared to 18.8% of women with early menopause and 22.6% of women with premature menopause. After adjusting for more than 50 variables—including weight, lifestyle habits, family history, and lab values—women with premature menopause still had a 12.3% higher risk of developing hypertension than women who reached menopause after age 45.

A further analysis modeling age at menopause on a continuous scale found that risk peaks not at the traditional premature-menopause cutoff of age 40 but between the ages 25 and 35, suggesting the cardiovascular risk associated with premature menopause may be concentrated in an even younger group of women than previously defined. Surgical menopause was associated with higher hypertension rates in initial analyses, but that association did not hold once other risk factors were considered.

Based on these findings, the study authors recommend that clinicians treat age at menopause as a distinct cardiovascular risk factor, particularly for women who reach menopause before age 40. In addition to individualized counseling on hormone therapy, they point to earlier identification and management of high blood pressure as an opportunity to help reduce long-term cardiovascular risk in this group of women.

Survey results are published in the article “Premature menopause is associated with the development of high blood pressure: a UK Biobank cohort study.”

“The results of this study highlight the potential adverse long-term health outcomes associated with premature menopause, and in particular, the need to regularly screen for cardiovascular risk factors such as hypertension. Use of hormone therapy is also routinely recommended in women with premature menopause at least until the natural age of menopause unless contraindications exist,” says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, medical director for The Menopause Society.

For more information about menopause and healthy aging, visit www.menopause.org.

The Menopause Society is dedicated to empowering healthcare professionals and providing them with the tools and resources to improve the health of women during the menopause transition and beyond. As the leading authority on menopause since 1989, the nonprofit, multidisciplinary organization serves as the independent, evidence-based resource for healthcare professionals, researchers, the media, and the public and leads the conversation about improving women’s health and healthcare experiences. To learn more, visit menopause.org.

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