Red Meat Link to Hypertension in Women Over 45 Years

by Pamela Jones, MA

En Español (Spanish Version)

Uncontrolled hypertension (high blood pressure) can lead to stroke, heart attack, heart failure, or kidney failure. Proper monitoring of your blood pressure, taking medication when needed, and simple lifestyle changes can help you avoid or manage high blood pressure.

Researchers at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston set out to determine if meat intake increased the risk of hypertension. The study published in the Journal of Hypertension, focused on women over the age of 45 years. The results suggested that the risk of hypertension increased as consumption of red meat increased.

About the Study

The study was a prospective cohort study that followed 28,766 women 45 years of age or older. Over a 10-year period the women were asked every year about their intake of both poultry and red meat as well as any diagnosis of hypertension. The researchers found the following relationship between consumption of red meat and high blood pressure diagnosis. High blood pressure was diagnosed in:

- 21.7% of women that ate no red meat
- 29.2% of women that ate <0.5 servings daily
- 29.8% of women that ate 0.5-1.0 servings daily
- 33.1% of women that ate 1.0-1.5 servings daily
- 35.6% of women that ate 1.5 or more servings daily

Red meat was found to be related to increased risk of hypertension, but poultry seemed to have no association with risk of hypertension.

How Does This Affect You?

Healthy lifestyle choices, including nutrition, can have a significant impact, not only on your risk for high blood pressure, but also on your overall health. Work toward a diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and fiber, and avoid saturated fats such as those found in red meat. A healthy diet does not need to completely eliminate red meat, but limit the amounts you do eat. Search for low-fat options in your meat choices.

Also, have your blood pressure checked regularly by a health professional. If you do have high blood pressure, work with your doctor to develop a plan to manage it.

RESOURCES:

American Academy of Family Physicians
http://familydoctor.org/

American Heart Association
http://www.americanheart.org

REFERENCES:
