

Mayo Clinic News Network

O12 Adrenal Nodule Create Health Risks

Intro: More than one out of 4 Americans has high blood pressure. For millions of them, a little known condition is to blame. The good news - the right treatment may cure their hypertension permanently and even save their life. Here's Dennis Douda for the Mayo Clinic News Network.

Video

Audio

| | |
|--|---|
| TRT 2:20 | |
| Dennis Douda speaking | For 10-years Jim Johnson struggled to control his high blood pressure |
| Jim Johnson Mayo Clinic Patient | “You know I would always be on various medications for that and the doctor would always say, oh you’ve got to lose some weight. You gotta do this, you gotta do that.” |
| Dennis Douda speaking | Other than fatigue, Jim had no symptoms. But, last year when his heart rate became dangerously slow, blood tests found severely depressed potassium and elevated aldosterone levels. A CT scan revealed something else. |
| Dr. William Young speaking | “See some small nodules in Jim’s right adrenal gland ... “ |
| Dennis Douda speaking | Mayo Clinic Endocrinologist William Young says the nodules were creating a condition responsible for 5 to 10 percent of all high blood pressure cases. |
| William Young, M.D. Mayo Clinic Endocrinologist | “Primary aldosteronism means where one or both of the adrenal glands produce too much of a natural hormone which is called aldosterone. So in the United states that comes out to 3.4 to 6.8 million individuals.” |
| Dennis Douda speaking | A simple blood test can confirm excess aldosterone levels, after which a visit to a Vascular Radiologist may be in order. |
| | /// NATS “Once again sir, stop your breathing. Good, hold your breath.” |
| Dennis Douda speaking | Mayo Clinic’s Dr. James Andrews says his job is to determine if the problem flows from the left or right adrenal, or both. With a procedure call AVS, Adrenal Vein Sampling he collects a small amount of blood from each side, where the tiny glands sit atop the kidneys. |

| | |
|--|---|
| | /// NATS (adrenal surgery) |
| Dennis Douda speaking | If only one adrenal gland is producing excess aldosterone, the condition is often cured by removing it. The minimally invasive operation takes a little more than an hour. Although surgeons may have to work their way around the stomach, colon, pancreas, spleen, or liver, Dr. Geoffrey Thompson says it's relatively low risk and patients generally bounce back very quickly. |
| Geoffrey Thompson, M.D. Mayo Clinic Endocrine Surgeon | "Typically they're out of the hospital the next day or at most 2-days later. And most of these patients are back to full normal activities within 10 to 14 days after the surgery." |
| Dr. William Young speaking | "... and the good news is we only need about half of one adrenal gland to be totally normal." |
| Dennis Douda speaking | Dr. Young says aldosteronism is the most common curable form of high blood pressure. For one-out-of-3 patients with this disorder, like Jim, finding and removing an adrenal nodule may be a lifesaver. Not only was he at risk for severe kidney damage, doctors told him his heart literally could have stopped. |
| Dr. William Young speaking | "Aldosterone turns out to be one of the most toxic hormones human beings make." |
| Dennis Douda speaking | For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Dennis Douda. |
| | |

Anchor tag: Dr. Young says very rarely are the adrenal nodules cancerous. He recommends that anyone under 30-with high blood pressure or anyone with poorly controlled blood pressure above 150 over 100 ask their doctor about having a simple blood test for excess aldosterone.

For more information, visit our website at ... [STATIONS: Per the licensing agreement, please provide a link from your station's website to <http://www.MayoClinic.org> or voice tag "MayoClinic.org" for more information.]