

Mayo Clinic Minute

Connection between estrogen and blood pressure

Video	Audio
Vivien Williams	There's new information out about women and how the hormone estrogen influences their health. In particular, their blood pressure.
Michael Joyner, M.D. Anesthesiology Mayo Clinic	"What we've discovered in my lab is that estrogen plays a key role in explaining why blood pressure is lower in young women and higher in older women."
Vivien Williams	Dr. Michael Joyner says estrogen affects a woman's blood pressure in two ways.
CLIP at 1:23 Michael Joyner, M.D.	"The first thing estrogen does is it affects the endothelial function of your blood vessels. The endothelium is the lining of the blood vessels, and estrogen keeps that lining slippery and helps relax the blood vessels."
Vivien Williams	The second thing is estrogen suppresses the level of nerves that constrict the blood vessels. At menopause, estrogen levels drop, and as women age, blood vessels don't function as well.
Michael Joyner, M.D.	"People need to remain physically active because that protects the vascular endothelium, and physical activity can also limit the ability of the sympathetic nerves to clamp down on the blood vessels."
Vivien Williams	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Vivien Williams.