

Estrogen may prevent younger menopausal women from strokes: study

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Estrogen may prevent strokes in premature or early menopausal women, Mayo Clinic researchers say. Their findings challenge the conventional wisdom that estrogen is a risk factor for stroke at all ages. The study was published in the journal *Menopause*.

Researchers combined the results from a recent Mayo Clinic study with six other studies from across the world and found that estrogen is protective for stroke before age 50. That is roughly the average age when women go through menopause.

"We were very surprised because these results were unexpected," says study author Walter Rocca, M.D., an epidemiologist and neurologist at Mayo Clinic. "The old idea that estrogen is always a problem in the brain has to be corrected." Estrogen can be a problem in older women, he explains, but in younger women, estrogen may be important to protect the brain from strokes.

The study has implications for women who experience premature (before age 40) or [early menopause](#) (before age 45) from natural causes or from ovary removal. Women in these groups should consider taking estrogen up to approximately age 50 to prevent stroke, Dr. Rocca says.

[Ischemic stroke](#) occurs as a result of an obstruction within a blood vessel supplying blood to the brain. According to the American Stroke Association, these types of strokes account for 87 percent of all stroke cases.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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