

Pets Are Good for You

People with pets are better able to manage stress than those without, according to a new study published in the journal *Hypertension*. The research involved 48 people with high blood pressure. All of them took the ACE inhibitor lisinopril; half were told to obtain a pet.

Before the study, members of the groups did not differ significantly in their responses to mental stress, as measured by serial subtraction and speech tests. Blood pressure was lower in both groups when at rest. However, responses to mental stress were significantly lower among pet owners than those who only received the medication.

The researchers concluded that while the drug lowers resting blood pressure, increased social support through pet ownership lowers blood pressure response to mental stress.

Source: *Allen K, Shykoff BE. Pet ownership, but not ACE Inhibitor Therapy, Blunts Home Blood Pressure Responses to Mental Stress. Hypertension, Oct. 18, 2001;38:815. (Abs.)*