

Refining the strategies for controlling blood pressure

(American Heart Association)

The importance of keeping blood pressure within a normal range is well established. Research in the *European Heart Journal* suggested the best time to take blood pressure medication is at bedtime. People who did so had a **45% lower risk** of having or dying from a heart attack, stroke or other cardiovascular problem.

The benefits of lower blood pressure might extend to the brain, according to research published in *JAMA*. That study of people 50 and older with high blood pressure **found lowering systolic pressure** – the top number in a reading – to a target of less than 120 millimeters of mercury lowered the risk of mild cognitive impairment compared with lowering blood pressure to less than 140.

Mild cognitive impairment is a risk factor for dementia. And while the study did not find a statistically important lowering of dementia rates, it didn't show an increase. Fear of such an increase had been part of a debate about how aggressively blood pressure should be treated, the researchers noted.

