Checking into the Hospital? Don't Check Out With a Blood Clot!

Did you know that getting a blood clot from a hospitalization, surgery, or other healthcare treatment or procedure (called healthcare-associated venous thromboembolism or HA-VTE for short) is a significant, costly and growing public health problem? It is! But it is also preventable!

Become familiar with the terminology used to discuss blood clots. *Learn the facts about HA-VTE and what you can do to prevent it from happening to you or someone you care about.*

Learn the Lingo About Blood Clots

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT):
Blood clot located in a deep vein usually in the leg or arm.

Pulmonary Embolism (PE):
Blood clot that has traveled from a deep vein to the lung. PE can be deadly.

Venous Thromboembolism (VTE):
DVT and PE are also known as VTE.

Healthcare-Associated VTE (HA-VTE):
A DVT or PE that occurs as a result of hospitalization, surgery, or other healthcare treatment or procedure.

The Facts

Blood Clots are Deadly and a Significant, Growing Public Health Problem.

- Serious and potentially deadly blood clots known as venous thromboembolism (VTE) affect as many as 900,000 Americans each year, leading to about 100,000 premature deaths.

Blood Clots are Costly.

- VTE-associated health care costs $10 billion or more each year in the United States. And, the costs due to healthcare-associated blood clots alone exceed $5 billion dollars per year.

Healthcare-Associated Blood Clots are Avoidable: Prevention is Key!

- As many as 70% of healthcare-associated blood clots are preventable, yet fewer than half of hospitalized patients receive appropriate preventive treatment.

Think You Aren't At Risk for a Blood Clot? Think Again!

Anyone can develop a blood clot. Blood clots do not discriminate by age, gender, ethnicity or race. There are many reasons why a person might develop a blood clot. Over half of all blood clots are directly related to a recent hospitalization or surgery and most of these do not occur until after discharge from the hospital.

Are you

☐ Currently (or have you recently been) hospitalized?

☐ Recovering from surgery?

☐ Being treated for cancer?

☐ On bed rest?

If you checked any of these, you have a higher risk of developing a blood clot. And the more risk factors you have, the greater your risk will be. But don't worry! Blood clots that occur as a result of hospitalization, surgery, or other healthcare treatments or procedures are preventable! Work with your healthcare provider to develop a plan to prevent VTE. It just might save your life!

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities
Division of Blood Disorders

Blood Clot Risk Factors – Could You Be at Risk?

- Hospitalization for illness or surgery
- Major surgery, particularly of the hip or knee
- Severe trauma, such as a car accident
- Injury to a vein that may have been caused by a broken bone or severe muscle injury
- Cancer and cancer treatments
- Pregnancy, including up to 6 weeks after the baby is born*
- Family members with blood clots*
- Being obese or overweight*
- Confinement to bed
- Sitting too long, especially with legs crossed
- Being age 55 and older*
- Previous blood clot*
- Taking hormonal medications*
- Having other medical conditions, like diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, or heart disease*

*Certain factors put you at even greater risk of HA-VTE when combined with hospitalization, surgery, and immobility (limited movement).

What Can You Do To Help Prevent Healthcare-Associated Blood Clots

Before surgery or hospitalization ask your healthcare provider:
- ☑ Am I at risk for a blood clot?
- ☑ Do I need preventive treatment to keep me from having a blood clot?

Upon discharge ask your your healthcare provider:
- ☑ What can I do to continue to prevent blood clots from developing once I'm home?
- ☑ What are the signs and symptoms of a blood clot?
- ☑ What should I do if I think I have a blood clot?

At Home
- ☑ Follow your doctor's instructions for preventing blood clots; take medicine as prescribed.
- ☑ Move your arms and legs to help prevent blood clots from forming.
- ☑ all your doctor if you think you have a blood clot.

Where Can You Go for More Information about Blood Clots?

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dvt/index.html
- Stop The Clot, Spread The Word™
  http://www.stoptheclot.org/spreadtheword/
- National Blood Clot Alliance
  http://www.stoptheclot.org/
- International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis, Inc.'s World Thrombosis Day
  http://www.worldthrombosisday.org/