Hospitalization:
A Major Risk Factor for Dangerous Blood Clots

Prevent the Need for 911. Get the Facts on Blood Clots.

About half of all blood clots occur during or within 3 months of a hospital stay or surgery.

Many of these blood clots can be safely prevented.

Nearly half of all hospital patients do not receive proper prevention measures.

Know Your Risk: The Link Between Hospitalization and Blood Clots
Hospitalization, particularly involving physical trauma, surgery, or prolonged immobility, increases the risk for blood clots.

Physical Trauma
Injury to a vein that may be caused by a broken bone, muscle injury, or other serious injury to the body.

Surgery
Major surgery, particularly of the pelvis, abdomen, hip, or knee.

Immobility
Confined to a bed or wheelchair for long periods of time due to a hospital stay, injury, or illness.

Understanding Blood Clots
A blood clot in one of the large veins, usually in a person’s leg or arm, is called a deep vein thrombosis or DVT. When a DVT forms, it can partially or completely block the flow of blood through the vein.

If a DVT is not treated, it can move or break off and travel to the lungs.

A blood clot in the lungs is called a pulmonary embolism or PE. This requires immediate medical attention since it can cause death.

Roughly 1 out of 10 hospital deaths are related to blood clots in the lungs.

Blood clots are a leading cause of preventable hospital death in the United States.

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Confined to a bed or wheelchair for long periods of time due to a hospital stay, injury, or illness.

Before You Enter the Hospital
- Discuss your potential risk factors and family health history with your doctor.
- Ask if you will need prevention measures for blood clots while in the hospital.
- Make sure that all of your doctors know your blood clot risks and ask for a prevention plan.

Before You Leave the Hospital
- Ask your doctor how to prevent blood clots when you are at home.
- Discuss the signs and symptoms of blood clots.
- Make sure you know what to do if you experience the signs or symptoms of a blood clot.

When You Return Home
- Follow instructions and take medications as prescribed.
- Move around. If confined to bed or a wheelchair, have someone help you move your arms and legs.
- Notify your doctor if you experience signs or symptoms of blood clots.

IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS...

Blood Clots in Your Legs or Arms
- Alert your doctor as soon as you can.
  - Swelling of your legs or arms
  - Pain or tenderness not caused by an injury
  - Skin that is warm to the touch
  - Redness or discoloration of the skin

Blood Clots in Your Lungs
- Seek medical attention immediately.
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Chest pain that worsens with a deep breath
  - Coughing, or coughing up blood
  - Faster than normal or irregular heartbeat

To learn more about blood clots and to spread the word, visit stoptheclot.org/spreadtheword

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