Blood clots can affect anyone, and blood clots can be prevented.

**ON AVERAGE, ONE AMERICAN DIES OF A BLOOD CLOT EVERY 6 MINUTES**

**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 blood clot like this forms, it can partly 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 lung is called a **pulmonary embolism** or **PE**, and can cause death and requires immediate medical attention.

**KNOW THE RISKS**

Blood clots do not discriminate by age, gender, ethnicity or race. Blood clots can affect anyone. Three major risk factors are:

- **Cancer**
- **Hospitalization & Surgery**
- **Pregnancy**

**Other Risk Factors Include:**

- Birth control that contains estrogen
- Hormone replacement therapy that contains estrogen
- Trauma, particularly when the vein is injured
- Immobility or sitting for long periods
- Being overweight
- Family history of blood clots
- Smoking
RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS
Blood clots can be safely treated.

**DVT (Arm or Leg)** – if you experience any of these, call your doctor as soon as possible.
- Swelling of your leg or arm
- Pain or tenderness not caused by an injury
- Skin that is warm to the touch, with swelling or pain
- Redness of the skin, with swelling or pain

**PE (Lung)** – if you experience any of these, seek medical attention immediately.
- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain that worsens with a deep breath
- Coughing up blood
- Faster than normal or irregular heartbeat

**BLOOD CLOTS CAN BE PREVENTED**

- Know your risks and recognize signs and symptoms.
- Tell your doctor if you have risk factors for blood clots.
- Before any surgery, talk with your doctor about blood clots.
- See your doctor as soon as you can if you do have any symptoms.

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

**SOURCES**
1. Calculation based on 100,000 deaths per year, *The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Prevent Deep Vein Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolism*, 2008

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