

March is Blood Clot Awareness Month

MEET THE NATIONAL BLOOD CLOT ALLIANCE

What happens every minute in the United States? Someone is *diagnosed* with a blood clot.¹

What happens every six minutes in the United States? Someone *dies* from a blood clot.²

But, you may be asking yourself - what IS a blood clot? Blood clotting is a normal, complex process that prevents excessive bleeding when a blood vessel is injured, but sometimes these clots can form abnormally. Blood clots can occur in arteries and in veins, but their causes, effects, and treatments are different. Arterial blood clots can lead to strokes and heart attacks. Venous blood clots form in the deep veins of the body and can cause conditions known as deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE). Venous blood clots most commonly occur in the leg, but can also occur in the veins of the arm, abdomen, or around the brain. Blood clots can happen to anyone, at any age, and at any time.

Now that you know what a blood clot is, it's time to grasp the impact of blood clots. Hundreds of thousands of people are affected by this common health condition each year, and sadly, many will lose their lives due to blood clots. Blood clots have a huge societal and financial impact on survivors, families, and caregivers of those with blood clots.

BLOOD CLOT STATISTICS:

- Venous blood clots (DVT and PE) occur in an estimated 900,000 Americans each year.³
- Approximately 100,000 Americans die each year from venous blood clots.⁴
- Venous blood clots kill more people than AIDS, breast cancer, prostate cancer and motor vehicle crashes combined.⁵
- Venous blood clots cost our nation up to \$10 billion each year.⁶

March is Blood Clot Awareness Month. This is a time to learn and to share important lifesaving information about blood clots that could not only save your life, but the life of someone you love. Blood Clot Awareness Month is also a time to learn about the nation's *leading* patient advocacy organization that works tirelessly each day to unite, support, and mobilize those who are affected by blood clots and clotting disorders.

This organization is the National Blood Clot Alliance. In 2003, the National Blood Clot Alliance or "NBCA" was founded by patients and medical professionals attending a blood clot workshop hosted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

NBCA's mission is to advance the prevention, early diagnosis, and successful treatment of life-threatening blood clots such as DVT and PE. NBCA serves over three million people each year. But, at its core, NBCA is patient-led. Eighty percent of NBCA's Volunteer Board of Directors are blood clot survivors, caregivers or family members that have lost a loved one due to a blood clot. They **know** the patient because they **are** the patient.

NBCA accomplishes its mission through programs that build public awareness, educate patients and healthcare professionals, and promote and advance supportive public and private sector policy. NBCA has several signature programs that aim to reduce the morbidity and mortality due to blood clots in at-risk populations, and programs aimed to reduce health disparities. Some of these programs include:

Women and Blood Clots: Women are at a unique risk for blood clots due to pregnancy, birth control, and postmenopausal hormone therapy. These risks are attributable to estrogen, which is a key ingredient in birth control pills, patches and rings, and in hormone therapy. NBCA developed a web-based portal that educates women on blood clot risks that may be specific to them. Please visit www.womenandbloodclots.org to learn more.

Stop the Clot, Spread the Word™: STCSTW is a public health campaign between NBCA and the CDC. Despite being a common health condition, only 6% of Americans know what a DVT is and how it can be prevented. This campaign seeks to build public awareness about blood clot risks and the signs and symptoms of blood clots. Since its launch in 2015, this campaign has reached more than 200 million people through an online and digital media effort which encourages participants to ask themselves one potentially life-saving question: Could I be at risk for a blood clot?

Health Disparities Initiative: NBCA recognizes the role that health equity plays in blood clot incidence and mortality, and is committed to reducing disparities in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of blood clots. NBCA is part of a quality improvement project led by MediCom Worldwide in partnership with the Mississippi State Medical Association, Mississippi Hospital Association, and the Mississippi Business Group on Health. This initiative is aimed at reducing health disparities and improving health outcomes among African Americans affected by blood clots in rural Mississippi.

The CLUES Blood Clot Study: High levels of anxiety, depression, and stress have been reported among blood clot patients. This study will examine how blood clots affect patients' mental health. NBCA conducted the largest study of its kind in Fall 2021 examining the emotional well-being of blood clot survivors.

With the advent of COVID, the need to spread life-saving information about blood clots is needed more than ever. Together, we can make a difference in the prevention and successful treatment of life-threatening blood clots!

“
We're all a part of NBCA in one way or another - survivors, caregivers of survivors, or know someone that's been affected by blood clots. By knowing the signs and symptoms, if we can save one life, it's like saving a million.
”

- Arshell Brooks-Harris, NBCA Board Member & Mother of Leschel Brooks, who lost her life to a pulmonary embolism

Here is how you can help:

- 1. Know Your Risk.** Blood clots are a common and often preventable health condition. Talk to your doctor about your risk factors for a blood clot and ways to reduce your risk.
- 2. Take Action.** Educate yourself about blood clots. Know the signs and symptoms of a DVT and PE. If you suspect a clot, don't delay getting medical help.
- 3. Partner With Us.** Sign up to be a **NBCA Thrombassador**. NBCA is building a grassroots network of thrombosis ambassadors - thrombassadors - who are patients, caregivers and family members from across the nation who are trained to promote NBCA's blood clot awareness mission.

“ When I was diagnosed with a life-threatening pulmonary embolism in 2018, I left a New York City hospital with ZERO information. NBCA helped me to get my life and health back on track. I am driven to ensure that everyone has access to life saving information about blood clots, and that every patient has a voice. We can't do this work alone. We need your support and the time is now! ”

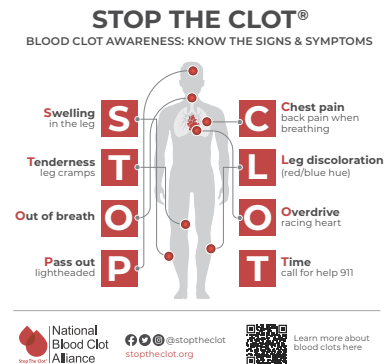
- Leslie Lake, NBCA President

HELP US TO STOP THE CLOT®!

For additional resources on current NBCA programs, community engagement and resources, please visit www.stoptheclot.org.



@stoptheclot



Byline: Kristi C. Guillory, is an DVT survivor and thriver since 2019. She is also an attorney, public policy expert, and author. She is working to spread blood clot awareness in the African-American community.

1. CDC VTE Data and Statistics, <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dvt/data.html>
2. CDC VTE Data and Statistics, <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dvt/data.html>
3. CDC VTE Data and Statistics, <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dvt/data.html>
4. CDC VTE Data and Statistics, <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dvt/data.html>
5. Cohen AT, Agnelli G, Anderson FA, et al. Venous thromboembolism (VTE) in Europe. *Thromb Haemost.* 2007, 98: 756-764.
6. Gross, S et al. "The economic burden of incident venous thromboembolism in the United States: A review of estimated attributable healthcare costs," *Thrombosis Research* vol. 137 (2016): 3-10.
7. Surgeon General's Call to Action on DVT/PE, <https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44188/>