FACT SHEET: DVT AND YOUR OTHER HEALTH CONDITIONS

Deep-vein thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot that forms inside a deep vein, most often in the lower leg. Once formed, a fragment of the clot can break off and may cause severe complications, such as pulmonary embolism (PE) and even death if not diagnosed and treated appropriately.¹

While DVT can occur in almost anyone, certain individuals may be at increased risk for developing DVT. Some of these risk factors include other health conditions – also called co-morbidities – including but not limited to cancer, obesity and heart and respiratory conditions. Patients with these conditions may be at increased risk for DVT and should talk with their healthcare professional about ways to reduce the risk.

To learn more visit www.preventdvt.org.

Why is DVT a concern for people with other health conditions?

- People who suffer from other health conditions (or co-morbidities) such as cancer, heart disease or obesity, may have a heightened risk of developing a DVT or PE and increased risk of death.²

- Pulmonary embolism (PE), a complication from DVT, kills up to 300,000 people a year in the U.S. – that’s more than AIDS and breast cancer combined.³

- Almost all hospitalized patients have at least one risk factor for DVT and PE, and approximately 40 percent of patients have three or more risk factors.⁴,⁵

Why is DVT a concern for people with cancer?

- Cancer may put you at an increased risk for DVT blood clots because:⁶
  - Tissue damage and inflammatory responses may lead to activation of the blood clotting (coagulation) system.
  - Tumors also release chemicals which trigger clotting.
  - Surgery or chemotherapy may injure blood vessel walls, causing the blood to clot.
  - Certain types of cancer treatments may reduce the body’s ability to produce blood clotting factors.

- Up to 20 percent of all cases of DVT or PE occur in cancer patients.⁷

- Venous thromboembolism (VTE) which includes deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE) is the second leading cause of death in cancer patients.⁹
  - More than 50 percent of people who died from certain cancers were found to have developed a DVT.⁷,¹⁰
• Although all patients with active cancer have an increased risk of DVT or PE the risk appears to be higher for those with:11
  o Pancreatic cancer
  o Lymphoma
  o Malignant brain tumors
  o Cancer of the liver
  o Colorectal cancer
  o Leukemia
  o Other digestive cancers

• Compared to patients without cancer, cancer patients with VTE have a:12
  o Higher risk of recurrent DVT or PE
  o Higher risk of bleeding on anticoagulants
  o Higher risk of dying

Why is DVT a concern for people with heart and respiratory conditions?

• Cardiovascular disease is one of the leading causes of death in the United States.
  o After acute coronary syndrome and stroke, DVT or PE is the third most common cardiovascular illness.13

• Anyone fighting a respiratory condition known as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is at heightened risk for VTE, due to inflammation, which may affect the proper functioning of the veins and arteries.14
  o Patients with COPD have approximately twice the risk of PE and other venous thromboembolic events (VTE) than those without COPD.14
  o PE can exacerbate respiratory symptoms such as dyspnea and chest pain.14
  o One of four COPD patients who requires hospitalization for an acute exacerbation may have PE.14

Why is DVT a concern for people who are obese?

• Individuals who are obese or have a body mass index (BMI) of greater than 30 are at an increased risk for developing DVT.11

• The combination of obesity and other risk factors increases the risk of DVT.11
  o Obese women on oral contraceptives are more likely to have an increased risk of DVT than non-obese women on oral contraceptives.
  o Obese women under age 40 have a highest risk of DVT – being six times as likely as non-obese women under age 40 to have DVT.15,16
    ▪ For men younger than 40, obesity more than triples the risk of DVT.15,16
References: