

Treating CAT

Dealing with CAT and preventing recurrence

Treatment for CAT is effective and relatively simple.

DVT and PE are most often treated with anticoagulants (often referred to as “blood thinners”), though they don't actually thin the blood, but rather slow the clotting process.

Anticoagulants prevent new clots from developing and stop existing clots from growing. Treatment usually continues for at least six months to prevent recurrence.

One of the main side effects of anticoagulant therapy is the risk of bleeding. In most cases, this should not deter you from seeking treatment.

PREVENTION

Minor lifestyle changes can make a difference.

- 1 **Keep moving:** stretch your legs, move your feet, take a little walk.
- 2 **Quit smoking:** support is there if you want it.
- 3 **Stay hydrated:** drink plenty of fluids and avoid excessive alcohol
- 4 **Wear prescribed compression sock /stockings.**

HAVE A CONVERSATION

Three questions to ask your doctor:

- 1 What is my risk for CAT?
- 2 What should I look out for?
- 3 If I'm concerned I have CAT, what should I do?

**Own your health.
Be clot conscious.**

Speak to your healthcare professional today.

For more information contact:
Thrombosis Ireland

Details:

Name.....

Your Healthcare team contact is:

.....

In-Hours contact number:

.....

If you are worried about blood clots outside of clinic hours. Go straight to A&E or call your acute Oncology team

(Out of hours contact):

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**Always err on the side of caution...
If in doubt check it out.**

For more information contact
Thrombosis Ireland @ 087 3634828.

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Cancer-Associated Thrombosis (CAT)

Patient Information Leaflet



Thrombosis Ireland
Spot The Signs... Save A Life

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Blood Clots, Cancer & You: What you need to know

Be Clot Conscious

Cancer is a disease with many aspects to be considered. These relate to treatment, the disease itself and the implications on your daily lifestyle. One of the most important aspects is the possibility of developing a blood clot. This condition is known as cancer-associated thrombosis (CAT).

Here are three things you need to know about CAT:

1. *Cancer can cause potentially fatal blood clots.*
2. *In many cases, CAT is preventable.*
3. *CAT is treatable - provided it is caught on time.*

What is a Blood Clot:

Understanding deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism.

Clots form when blood cells stick together blocking blood vessels.

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a clot that forms within a deep vein, usually in the leg.

If untreated, part of the clot can break off and travel to the lungs, blocking blood flow. This is called pulmonary embolism (PE) and can be potentially fatal if not detected and treated early.

CANCER & CLOTS

The risk is real

People with cancer have a higher than normal risk of developing a venous clot. Indeed, blood clots are the second most common cause of preventable death in cancer patients, after cancer itself. Yet this condition remains under-reported, seldom discussed and often mis-diagnosed.

While all people with cancer are at some risk of developing CAT, certain people are at higher risk than others. Your risk profile will depend on:

◆ Type of cancer

Certain cancers have higher risk of CAT, including cancers of the stomach, pancreas, brain, kidney and ovaries, as well as hematological malignancies.

◆ Stage of Cancer

Cancer that is at an advanced stage can increase the risk of a clot, even in people with cancers that are otherwise considered low-risk.

◆ Cancer treatment

Even though chemotherapy, radiation and other procedures such as surgery are vital to fight the cancer, these treatments can also cause clots.

◆ Hospitalisation/immobilization

Being confined to bed for extended periods of time or otherwise inactive can lead to clots, in people with all types of cancer.

◆ History of Clots

If you have previously had a clot, you are three times more likely to develop CAT than people who have never had a clot.

If you have one or more of these risk factors, you should speak to your doctor about your increased risk of CAT.

Thrombosis is now considered a chronic disease in cancer patients because the risk of recurrence can continue for as long as the cancer is present and for the duration of cancer therapy

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Know your risk

Recognise symptoms early

Take action fast

CAT is not usually a silent stalker. Blood clots typically make themselves known, and can often be stopped before they become life-threatening. But you must know – and be alert to – the signs and symptoms.

Speak to your doctor or nurse immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms of deep vein thrombosis:

- ◆ Swelling in the foot, ankle or arm. (Skin may feel stretched), particularly if it appears in one leg or arm only.
- ◆ Pain, cramping or tenderness, often in the calf or upper arm.
- ◆ Redness or noticeable discoloration of the leg or arm.
- ◆ Warm or heavy sensation in the leg or arm.

Contact emergency services immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms of pulmonary embolism (PE).

- ◆ Light-headedness/dizziness
- ◆ Unexplained shortness of breath
- ◆ Irregular heartbeat
- ◆ Chest Pain (especially when breathing deeply)
- ◆ Coughing up blood
- ◆ Always err on the side of caution.

If in doubt, check it out.

Some people may mistake CAT symptoms for normal side effects of cancer treatment. However, if you are in any doubt at all, seek medical attention straight away.

YOU NEED TO BE VIGILANT