Treating Venous Thromboembolism (VTE)

What Is VTE?
There are 2 main types of VTE:
• Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) – A blood clot in a large vein, commonly in the leg
• Pulmonary embolism – A blood clot in an artery in the lung

What Is the Treatment for VTE?
DVT and PE are treated with an anticoagulant, which can be taken as a medication (tablet) or as a shot (injection)
Anticoagulants stop blood clots from getting larger and prevent new clots from forming

Preventing VTE
• You can reduce your risk for getting DVT in several ways:
  — Reach and maintain a healthy body weight
  — Be active
  — Wear compression socks
  — Take an anticoagulant (if recommended by your healthcare provider)
• If you have to sit for an extended period (>4 hours):
  — Stand and walk around, if possible, after 2-3 hours
  — When sitting, move your ankles, lift your toes, lift your heels, and squeeze and relax your leg muscles
  — Wear comfortable (loose) clothing
• If you have been on bed rest following surgery or an injury, start moving around as soon as you can

DVT Symptoms
Half of patients have symptoms in the affected area:
• Swelling
• Warmth or heat in the swollen area
• Tenderness or pain
• Redness or bluish-purplish discoloration of the skin

PE Symptoms *DVT increases the risk of developing PE*
Symptoms of PE are a medical emergency and you should call 9-1-1:
• Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
• Sharp chest pain while breathing in
• Coughing up blood
• Fast heartbeat
• Dizziness or fainting

Tips for Taking an Anticoagulant
• Take your medication as directed
• Never stop taking your medication without talking with your healthcare provider
• Use an alarm and/or a pill box to help you remember to take your medication at the same time(s) every day
• Don’t take aspirin, ibuprofen, over-the-counter pain relief medication, or herbal supplements (such as St. John’s Wort) without talking with your healthcare provider

Treatment Monitoring
• Know when you need to meet with your healthcare provider for a follow up visit
• Know when you need to have a blood test
• Let your dentist, surgeon, or healthcare professional know you are taking an anticoagulant before a procedure
• Watch for side effects, such as bleeding
• Most bleeding is minor and can be treated at home
• Minimize minor bleeding events by:
  — Using a soft bristle toothbrush,
  — Using an electric razor, and
  — Avoiding activities and sports that may cause injury

Dangers
• Missed a dose of your anticoagulant
• Took 2 doses of your anticoagulant by mistake
• There's blood in your urine
• Your stool is black

Go to the Emergency Department If You
• Hit your head (even if you aren’t bleeding)
• Are in an accident
• Cut yourself and can’t stop bleeding
• Cough or vomit blood
• Have sudden, severe back or chest pain
• Are suddenly and severely short of breath
• Have a sudden, severe headache
• Sudden inability to move your arms or legs
• Unexpected changes in vision
• Have memory loss or confusion

Supported by Bristol-Myers Squibb and Pfizer Alliance 2017
## Plan for My VTE Treatment and Overall Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diet:</th>
<th>My Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follow up appointment(s):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise:</td>
<td>_____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g., compression socks, stop taking St John’s Wort, get up</td>
<td>_____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from desk every 2-3 hours, get a soft bristle toothbrush, etc):</td>
<td>_____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Taking Medication As Directed Is Important for Me:</td>
<td>_____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I Should Do If I Miss a Dose:</td>
<td>_____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I Should Do If I Take 2 Doses:</td>
<td>_____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Downloadable copies available from https://www.aanp.org/education/education-toolkits

Supported by Bristol-Myers Squibb and Pfizer Alliance 2017