

World Thrombosis Day Awareness Video

Know the Signs and Symptoms of Thrombosis: World Thrombosis Day

For the General Public

What would you do if I told you millions of people all over the world are dying from a mostly preventable condition?

Would you be willing to help protect yourself? Your loved ones? And your friends?

I'm talking about thrombosis – the medical term for blood clots.

Blood clots are the underlying cause of the world's top three cardiovascular killers – heart attack, stroke and venous thromboembolism.

Hello, I'm Dr. Gary Raskob.

I'm here on behalf of organizations and individuals all across the world who want to raise awareness about this important public health issue.

To that end, October 13, 2014, marks the inaugural World Thrombosis Day.

Led by the International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis, with oversight by renowned medical and public health experts, World Thrombosis Day is an educational initiative with the ultimate goal of reducing the significant disease burden caused by blood clots.

But it is people like you who will help us achieve that goal.

You've already taken the first important step by watching this video. Over the next few minutes, I hope you'll learn more about blood clots, their risk factors and warning signs.

Then, I hope you will take ACTION to protect yourself, your loved ones, friends and colleagues.

So exactly what is Thrombosis?

It's the medical word that refers to a blood clot that forms in an artery or a vein. It can happen to anyone at any age.

Many of us are aware that blood clots in the brain may cause stroke. Most also know that blood clots in and around the heart may result in heart attack.

But there is less awareness of venous thromboembolism and that is why it is the primary focus of this first World Thrombosis Day awareness campaign.

When a blood clot forms in a deep vein, usually in the legs, it's called deep vein thrombosis, or DVT. When the clot breaks off and travels from the leg up to the lungs, it is called pulmonary embolism, or PE. Pulmonary embolism is a life-threatening emergency that requires immediate medical attention.

Together these two types of dangerous blood clots are known as venous thromboembolism or VTE.

In Europe alone, more than twice as many people die from VTE than die from breast cancer, prostate cancer, AIDS and motor vehicle crashes combined.

543,000 deaths a year in the European Union – that's equivalent to losing every passenger on 86 jumbo jets each and every month.

The good news is that you can take steps to protect yourself and those around you.

It begins with knowing the warning signs.

Let's start with clots in the leg veins, deep vein thrombosis or DVT.

You may feel pain or tenderness in the calf or thigh. Your leg may swell. It may feel warm and you may notice redness or discoloration.

Pulmonary embolism or PE happens when a blood clot breaks loose and travels to the lungs.

The warning symptoms of PE include: Shortness of breath, rapid breathing, chest pain that may be worse with a deep breath, rapid heart rate or light headedness and passing out.

While these symptoms can be common with other less serious medical problems, it is important to seek professional medical help immediately.

The longer you wait, the greater the risk.

So if you notice symptoms that may point to a blood clot, see your doctor because prompt treatment can be the difference between life and death.

Unfortunately, the first manifestation of a VTE may be sudden death, and that is why prevention is the key to reducing deaths from these blood clots.

There are factors that may increase your risk that you should know about.

The three major risk factors for VTE include:

- **One:** Being admitted to the hospital. Hospitalization leads to two out of every three cases of blood clots. And VTE is the leading cause of preventable hospital death.
- **Two:** Surgery, especially hip and knee surgery, and surgery for cancer, puts you at greater risk for blood clots
- And not moving for long periods of time puts you at risk.

For example, having to stay in bed or long airplane or car trips without getting up and walking around. These are both examples of being immobile that can increase your risk.

Other risk factors include:

- **Increasing age:** The older we get the greater our risk for developing a blood clot.
- **Family History:** If someone in your family has had a blood clot, you may be at increased risk, especially if you have an additional risk factor like undergoing surgery or hospitalization.

For women there are additional risk factors. These include using estrogen medications like oral contraceptives or post-menopausal estrogen therapy AND pregnancy or recently having given birth.

Now that you know some of the warning signs and risk factors, I urge you to take ACTION to prevent blood clots.

Be proactive. Know your risk.

Then talk to your doctor or health care provider about whether you should receive some type of prevention for blood clots– especially if you are admitted to the hospital or if you are having surgery.

And keep moving – If you will be immobile for four hours or more while traveling or even sitting at your desk, take time to get up, stretch your legs and walk around.

Finally, take ACTION to help spread the word about blood clot prevention.

Talk to your employer and other community organizations about hosting a World Thrombosis Day Awareness event.

We've provided a great number of resources online – with ideas for events, a How To Awareness Kit, flyers, posters and more – even tips to encourage media coverage.

It's all available free of charge to help you help us spread the word.

We hope you will be able to utilize these tools to implement your own ACTION PLAN – with your help, we can SAVE LIVES in your community and throughout the world.

To learn more, please visit the World Thrombosis Day website at www.WorldThrombosisDay.org.