



The Beat

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A publication of the North American Thrombosis Forum



NATFonline.org is now Thrombosis.org.
Our website has a new look, but the same high-quality information!



Unpacking NATF's Mission Statement: What is a "Related Disease"?

NATF's mission is to improve the lives of those affected by blood clots **and related diseases**. But what do we mean by "related diseases" and why focus on these issues?

"Many common diseases can cause blood clots, which can be life-threatening or result in irreversible harm to our bodies. NATF therefore supports broad educational measures to address a wide range of conditions, including coronary artery disease (CAD), atrial fibrillation (Afib), diabetes, and cancer, to name a few," said Dr. Christian Ruff, Chair of the NATF Medical Advisory Board and member of the NATF Board of Directors.

To better understand the connection between blood clots and these related diseases, it's important to know that there are two classifications of thrombosis: arterial and venous.

- *Arterial thrombosis* refers to a blood clot that blocks an artery. Arteries carry blood away from the heart to other parts of the body. Arterial blood clots can block blood flow to the heart and brain, often resulting in a heart attack or stroke.
- *Venous thrombosis*, also known as venous thromboembolism or VTE, refers to a blood clot in a vein. Veins carry blood to the heart from other parts of the body. VTE includes deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE).

Evolving science has helped us recognize some important links between VTE and arterial events like heart attack and stroke. In the early 2000s, one study found that plaque (fatty deposits) in the head and neck arteries doubled the risk of VTE. Later studies also found that patients with a history of VTE had increased risks for both heart attack

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Introducing *Clotcast*: NATF's Limited-Series Podcast

Heart disease is a leading cause of death worldwide, killing nearly 18





INTRODUCING CLOTCAST: NATF'S LIMITED-SERIES PODCAST

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million people every year. More than 80% of these deaths occur after a heart attack or stroke. In the US alone, heart disease claims a life every 36 seconds and continues to be the #1 cause of death among most underserved communities and people of color.



Neil Skolnik, MD

Heart disease *is* preventable – but there are many factors that can impact a person’s risk beyond lifestyle and genetics. *Clotcast* aims to explore some of these underrecognized issues, such as medication adherence and patient-clinician communication. In this five-episode series, our esteemed host, Dr. Neil Skolnik, Professor of Family and Community Medicine at the Sidney Kimmel Medical College – Thomas Jefferson University, brings clinicians and patients together to discuss lessons learned from their collective experiences with thrombosis, heart disease, and the healthcare system at large.

REFERENCES

[World Health Organization](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)



ALL FIVE EPISODES ARE STREAMING ON:



Spotify



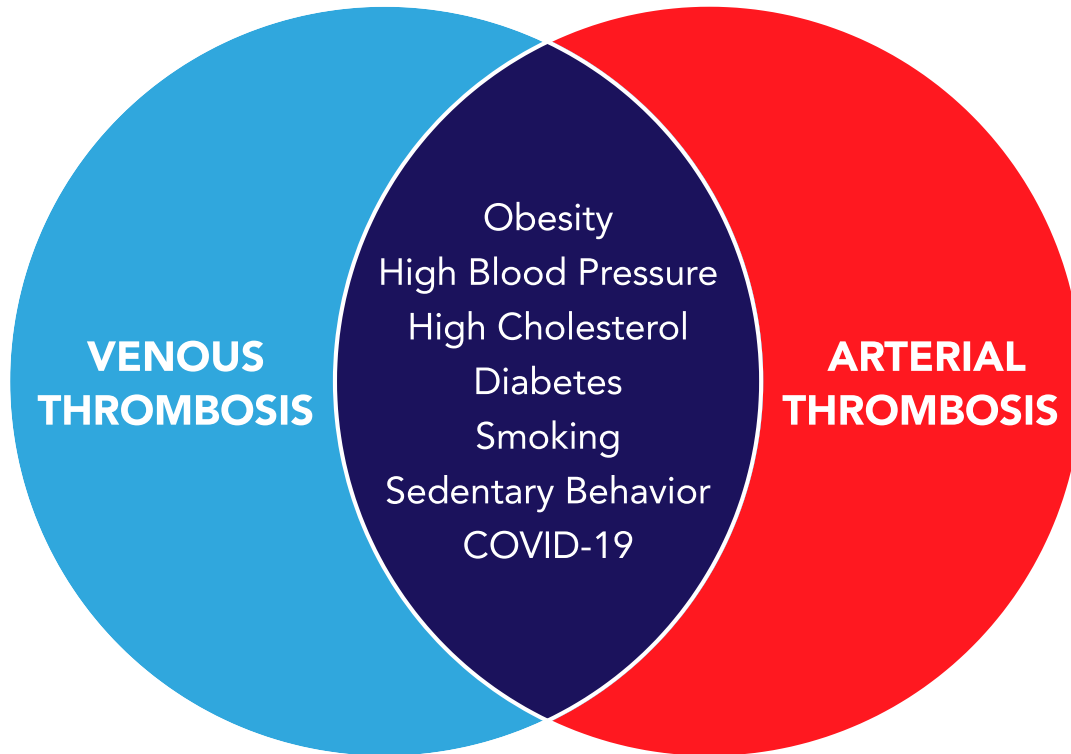
Google



Apple



NATF's website



and stroke versus patients without a history of VTE. These findings provided key jumping-off points for more research into the connections between VTE and acute coronary syndromes (conditions characterized by reduced blood flow to the heart).

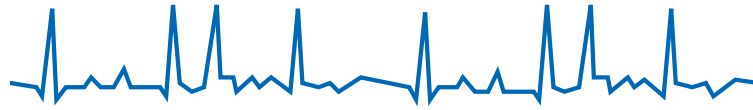
We now know that VTE and arterial thrombosis share several risk factors, including obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, smoking, sedentary behavior and COVID-19. In other words, all of these conditions increase a person's risk of heart attack, stroke, *and* DVT/PE – which is why NATF's educational efforts often focus on lifestyle topics like cholesterol management, heart-healthy nutrition, exercise, and managing inflammation.

Cancer and Afib are additional conditions that warrant our attention. "Cancer is a very strong risk factor for developing a clot. If you consider everyone with a blood clot today, roughly 20% of those people have cancer," says Dr. Jean Connors, the Medical Director of the Anticoagulation Management Service at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Certain types of cancers are more associated with clots, such as pancreatic and stomach cancer. Some chemotherapy and radiation treatments also increase the risk of blood clots.

Afib occurs when the electrical impulses that power the heart are uneven, causing the heart to beat irregularly. Patients with Afib are at risk of developing blood clots in the heart, which can lead to ischemic stroke (a stroke caused by a clot blocking blood flow to the brain). About 15% of strokes can be attributed to Afib – but the good news is that 80% of all Afib-related strokes can be prevented with the use of blood thinners.

Finally, there's strong evidence that pregnancy and the use of birth control pills or other hormone therapies increase a woman's risk of having a blood clot. "Estrogen itself increases the risk for blood clots. If you look at a woman's lifetime risk for thrombosis, it goes up at puberty and stays up until a woman goes through menopause," says Dr. Gregory Piazza, NATF's Chair of Healthcare Provider Education. Estrogen use has also been associated with increased VTE risk in transgender women, but the data is less clear on the risk in transgender men taking testosterone.

With knowledge comes power, and that's why NATF is expanding its educational scope beyond DVT and PE alone. To learn more about blood clot risk factors and diseases related to thrombosis, please visit our new [website](#). ■



ATRIAL FIBRILLATION (AFIB)



PREGNANCY



CANCER

KNOW THROMBOSIS



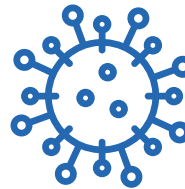
HORMONE THERAPY



CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE (CAD)



DIABETES



COVID-19

Many thanks to our article contributors:



Christian Ruff,
MD, MPH



Jean Connors,
MD



Gregory Piazza,
MD, MS

REFERENCES

Piazza G., Goldhaber SZ. Circulation.

Khorana A., et al. The Oncologist.

Thrombosis.org: What is Atrial Fibrillation?

Thrombosis.org: Birth Control - What You Need to Know



Upcoming Events & Support Groups



The NATF Support Group for Newly Diagnosed Patients

Hosted by Joelle Hochman, RRT, Chair of Patient Engagement and Education

It's normal to have a lot of questions and concerns after having a blood clot, and NATF is here to be your support system. We're pleased to offer a virtual support group experience specifically for patients who've recently had a blood clot.*

Our support groups enable patients to:

- Get accurate information about blood clots
- Share first-hand experiences with others
- Navigate the physical and psychological challenges of a clot

*This group is primarily geared towards patients who've had a blood clot in the past 12 months – but participants at any stage of diagnosis are welcome! If you're a longtime reader of *The Beat*, please help us spread the word about this support group! More information can be found on our website.

Upcoming Support Groups

April 21, 2022

May 19, 2022

June 16, 2022



CTEPH and You: A Webinar Series

Chronic Thromboembolic Pulmonary Hypertension (CTEPH) is a rare condition that can occur in patients who've had a pulmonary embolism (PE). While CTEPH can be life-threatening, it is curable. These webinars will focus on CTEPH risk, diagnosis, and treatment.

April 5, 2022

June 14, 2022



To register for these virtual meetings, please visit [Patient Events](#) on our website.

North American Thrombosis Forum
368 Boylston Street
Brookline, MA 02445

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NATF Board and Staff

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Founder and Lead Respiratory Therapist
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Gregory Piazza, MD, MS
**Chair, Healthcare Provider Engagement
& Education**
*Staff Physician, Division of Cardiovascular
Medicine*
Section Head, Vascular Medicine
Brigham and Women's Hospital
Associate Professor of Medicine
Harvard Medical School

Christian Ruff, MD, MPH
Co-Chair, Medical Advisory Board
*Associate Physician, Cardiovascular
Medicine Division*
Brigham and Women's Hospital
Associate Professor of Medicine
Harvard Medical School

Jeanine Walenga, PhD
Co-Chair, Research & Science
*Co-Director, Hemostasis and Thrombosis
Research Laboratories*
*Professor, Departments of Thoracic-
Cardiovascular Surgery and Pathology,
Stritch School of Medicine*
Loyola University Medical Center

STAFF

Kathryn Mikkelsen, MBA
Executive Director
KMikkelsen@natfonline.org

Courtney Anderson
Director of Operations
CJohnson@natfonline.org

Aviva Schwartz, MA
Director, Content & Education
Co-Chair, Medical Advisory Board
ASchwartz@natfonline.org

Maggie Newberg
Associate Director, Marketing
MNewberg@natfonline.org