

THE **Beat**



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My Doctor Said My Medicines Can Cause Bleeding...Are There Other Side Effects I Should Know About?

Reviewed by Margaret Fang, MD, MPH

Medicines for blood clotting conditions (including blood thinners and antiplatelet agents) help reduce your risk of getting a clot – but many medicines have side effects.

When starting any new medicine, [side effects](#) are common. Side effects are any symptoms you may experience due to the medicine itself; these are different than the symptoms from your clotting condition.

The most common side effect of medicines for preventing blood clots is an increased risk of [bleeding](#). People taking anticoagulants may bruise easily or experience “nuisance bleeding” (like more frequent nosebleeds), which is also called “patient-relevant bleeding.” These side effects can occur in up to [75%](#) of people taking these types of medicines.

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Your doctor and care team can help you reduce this risk by providing important tips about how to manage potential bleeds.

But did you know that you may experience other side effects of medicines for blood clots that you may not be familiar with?

Which Medicines Treat Blood Clotting Conditions?

Anticoagulants, also called blood thinners, and antiplatelet medicines are prescribed to treat and prevent blood clots.

Commonly Prescribed Anticoagulants

Warfarin (Jantoven®)



Apixaban (Eliquis®)



Rivaroxaban (Xarelto®)



Dabigatran (Pradaxa®)



Edoxaban (Savaysa®)



Commonly Prescribed Antiplatelets

Aspirin



Clopidogrel (Plavix®)



Ticagrelor (Brilinta®)



Prasugrel (Effient®)



While each type of medicine works a bit differently, you may experience some general side effects when starting one of these medicines for the first time.

What Are Other Potential Side Effects of Anticoagulants and Antiplatelets?

Anticoagulants

In addition to bleeding events, anticoagulants can also cause indigestion, dizziness, headaches, itchy skin, constipation, and diarrhea.

Other troublesome [side effects](#) of anticoagulants may include:

- [Hair loss](#)
- [Feeling cold](#)
- Burning or prickling sensations

Antiplatelets

Just like with anticoagulants, increased bleeding is also the most common side effect associated with antiplatelet agents. Additional side effects may include shortness of breath and upset stomach.

Additional [side effects](#) of antiplatelets are similar to anticoagulants and may include:

- Chest pain
- Stomach pain
- Ringing in the ears (tinnitus)

Always call your doctor or go to the ED if you start to experience troublesome side effects when starting a medicine.

What Else Should I Know about My Medicines?

When your doctor prescribes a medicine, they will review all of the possible side effects you may experience from your specific treatment. Your doctor may also explain that your medicine can interact with other medicines, [foods](#), or [supplements](#) that you take.

[Drug interactions](#) can increase or decrease the effectiveness of your medicine or the other medicines you're taking. They may also cause side effects.

That's why it's important to tell your doctor and care team about all of the medicines and supplements you're taking and if you start or stop taking a medicine.

Here are some [helpful tips](#) to help you stay on top of your medicines:

- **Make a list** of all of the medicines you take, including over-the-counter medicines, supplements, and herbs, and carry it with you.
- **If possible, always use the same pharmacy** to fill your prescriptions.
- **Talk to your pharmacist** or care team if you're having trouble affording your medicines.

- **Take notes** on your doctor's instructions for your medicines during your visit.

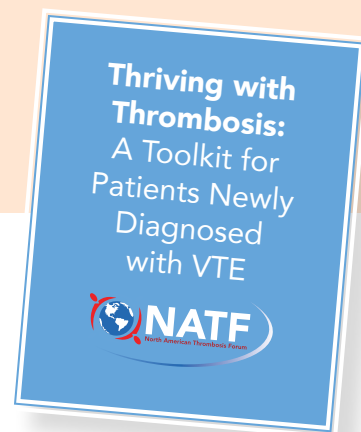
- **Use a pill box** to help you organize your medicines.

- **Set an alarm** on your phone to remind you when to take your medicine every day.

If you have any questions about your medicines, don't hesitate to ask your doctor, pharmacist, or other member of your healthcare team. And always take your medicines as prescribed!

[Learn more](#) about what to expect when starting a new medicine for blood clots.

Patients Are Asking: How Should I Manage a Negative Experience at the Emergency Department or During Follow-Up?



Experiencing a blood clot can be terrifying and very overwhelming. Whether you've recently been diagnosed with a blood clot or have been living with a blood clotting condition for a while, you likely remember your first clot very well.

Perhaps you went to the emergency department (ED) in a rush, not knowing what was happening. At the ED, you may have talked to a lot of different clinicians who performed many tests and procedures. It may have all felt like a blur.

Before you were discharged, were all of your questions answered? Were your test results explained? Or did you leave with more questions than when you arrived?

Perhaps when you saw your clinician for follow-up, your questions were answered and you felt more comfortable about what was going on and the treatment you needed...or maybe you felt then, and still feel, very uncertain and confused about your health.

You are not alone.

NATF understands the enormous challenges people face when first diagnosed with venous thromboembolism (VTE), which

includes deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE) – and we want to help!

We are developing a comprehensive resource for people newly diagnosed with blood clotting conditions called *Thriving with Thrombosis: A Toolkit for Patients Newly Diagnosed with VTE*. The goal of this toolkit is to provide people with the knowledge they need to understand and manage their VTE diagnosis, communicate effectively with their clinicians, and participate in treatment decision making.

The NATF toolkit will contain comprehensive web-based articles, guides, and videos that will walk through key timepoints in the VTE journey from the point of diagnosis through the first 3-6 months. These educational resources can help you and your loved ones better understand your condition, and will provide tools to improve communication with

your doctors, such as questions to ask during visits to help you have empowered conversations.

The toolkit will also include information on:

- Physical and mental health effects of VTE
- Discharge planning for people hospitalized with VTE
- Anticoagulant education
- Lifestyle considerations
- Considerations for women's and transgender health

NATF is working with clinicians, communication experts, mental health experts, and people like you to make sure everyone is well-equipped on their VTE journey starting from day one.

We are very excited to bring you this new set of tools, and will let you know when it's ready!

Visit our website to access our current [resources](#) for people with newly diagnosed VTE, including a guide to [The First Six Months](#) after a blood clot.



Newsworthy Notes from the Third Annual NATF Board Retreat

In late April, the NATF Board of Directors, Medical Advisory Board, and Staff came together for a productive—and fun!—two days to discuss our digital strategy.

During our meeting, we gained key insights on...

- How we want the world to view NATF – and through which channels

- How to better communicate the “related diseases” part of our mission statement*
- Defining features of our core target markets (patients, clinicians, and sponsors/funders)
- The value of social media for communicating awareness and education around blood clots and related diseases

After the meeting concluded, we squeezed in some cardio

and strength training by rowing down a river for several miles and competing in a “River Rodeo”!

A huge thank you to the NATF Board of Directors and Medical Advisory Board for their ongoing passion, dedication, and support of NATF and our mission.

*You can read more about this [here](#).

Scan the QR code to access important website links



Upcoming Patient Events

Blood Clot Education Group

Our virtual *Blood Clot Education Group* is a space to discuss all things related to thrombosis, or blood clotting. Join us to...

- Find accurate and trustworthy information about blood clots
- Learn about current research and treatments from experts
- Share your questions and experiences with others

June 11, 2024

In all online groups, a clinician will be available to answer general questions about blood clots. However, please note that they cannot provide personalized medical advice to any patients.

Blood Clot Support Group

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

After experiencing a blood clot, it's normal to have a lot of questions. Many people are left feeling confused about why this happened to them and anxious about it happening again.

We're pleased to offer a virtual support group experience where patients can share their stories, connect with others who have had blood clots, and receive emotional support.

June 20, 2024

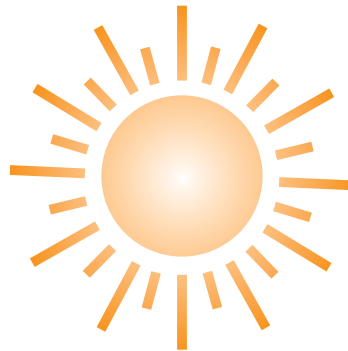
Long-PE and CTEPH Support Group

NATF is excited to offer a new support group for people who have had pulmonary embolism (PE), or blood clots in the lungs. Having a PE puts you at risk of developing a condition called chronic thromboembolic pulmonary hypertension, or CTEPH. If you're still experiencing symptoms like shortness of breath 6+ months after your PE, or if you have a CTEPH diagnosis, this group will provide a safe space to connect with others, receive support, and have questions answered by a clinician.

July 23, 2024

We'll return to our usual schedule in the Fall

All groups start at 7:00 PM EST



Support Group Summer Update!

We know that summer is a busy time! In July and August, we will be combining our Blood Clot Support Group and Blood Clot Education Group into one "hybrid" meeting each month. We'll return to our usual schedule in the Fall.

July 31, 2024

August 15, 2024

Both summer groups will run from 7:00-8:00 PM EST and will have a clinician available to answer general questions.

Do you like what you see in *The Beat* and find this information helpful?



Please consider making a donation to NATF to further support blood clot education.

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](#).

To register for these programs, please visit **Patient Events** on our website at <https://thrombosis.org/events/patients/>



Fighting blood clots
through education

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