

WHAT IS CANCER-ASSOCIATED THROMBOSIS (CAT)?

A blood clot is a normal body process that stops bleeding after an injury.

But sometimes clots form when they shouldn't. They can block blood flow in your blood vessels and be life-threatening.

The risk of blood clots is increased when someone has cancer. When a blood clot occurs in a patient with cancer, it's called **cancer-associated thrombosis (CAT)**.

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR CANCER-ASSOCIATED THROMBOSIS?

Cancer type

- A new cancer diagnosis (risk is highest for first 3 months after cancer is first discovered)
- Almost all cancers can cause blood clots, and pancreatic and stomach cancers are the highest risk
- Cancer that has spread (metastatic)

Cancer treatments

- Chemotherapy
- Surgery
- Hospital stays
- IV lines (especially lines that stay in like PICC lines and port-a-caths)

Other health problems

- Older age
- Not being active or not walking (immobility)
- Overweight
- Prior blood clots
- Smoking



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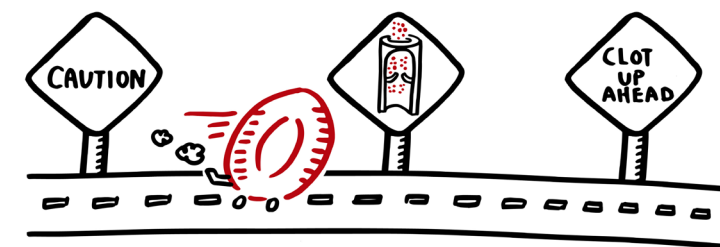
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CANCER-ASSOCIATED THROMBOSIS (CAT)

KNOW THE RISKS, PROTECT YOURSELF



KNOWING THE SIGNS OF BLOOD CLOTS (THROMBOSIS) CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE!



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CANCER-ASSOCIATED THROMBOSIS?

Symptoms of a deep vein thrombosis (DVT)

- Swelling of/or sense of heaviness in the leg or arm
- Pain, tenderness or cramping in the lower leg (calf)
- Redness, discolouration or warmth of the affected leg or arm
- Usually pain, swelling and/ or redness is mostly on one side of the body (unilateral)

Cancer patients can get leg swelling for lots of reasons. Leg or arm swelling that is **less** likely to be a blood clot:

- Equal swelling in both legs
- Leg swelling that comes with standing and goes away with lying down
- Leg swelling without pain or redness

Symptoms if you have an IV line (temporary IV, PICC line or indwelling catheter):

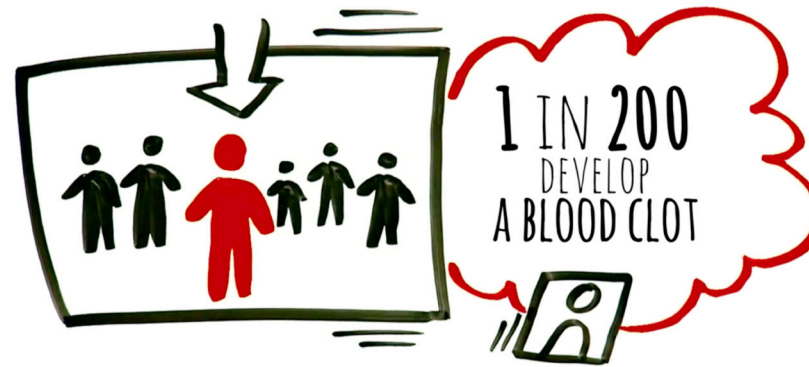
- Swelling of the arm or area around the IV
- Redness and/or warmth in the arm or area around the IV
- Pain in the arm or area around the IV
- The line is not working
- More noticeable/enlarged blood vessels under the skin of the upper arm and chest

Symptoms of a pulmonary embolism (PE)

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pains with breathing
- Less commonly, feeling faint, light-headedness, dizziness, coughing up blood, upper back pain

CANCER PATIENTS ARE SPECIAL

- If you have any of the symptoms, check in with your cancer-care team right away (within a day), or go the emergency department. **DO NOT WAIT** to see your family doctor.
- You may be on a low dose blood thinner already to treat a previous clot or to prevent CAT. **You can still get another clot.**
- You can get blood clots at any point, even 3 to 6 months after your last treatment



REDUCE YOUR RISK

1. Drink plenty of fluids

Dehydration (a harmful reduction in the amount of water in the body) is one of the main causes of DVT, as it can cause your blood to thicken and clot. Aim to drink 235 mL (8 ounces) of water every two hours during the day.

2. Stay active

Avoid sitting or lying down for long periods of time. Even a few laps around your kitchen or walking indoors for 10 minutes can help.

3. Stop smoking

Your healthcare team can help find a program that is right for you.

TAKE AWAY MESSAGES

- Cancer and its treatment increase your risk of a blood clot
- Recognizing the symptoms of blood clots is important because they can happen at any time
- If you have any symptoms of a DVT or PE, go to the emergency department



WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Visit www.thrombosiscanada.ca for more patient and family educational resources.

Cancer-associated Thrombosis – Patient Resource Library:
<https://thrombosiscanada.ca/cancer-associated-thrombosis-patient-resource-library/>

Helpful videos

VTE and Cancer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W12rn4IbLMA>

Cancer-associated thrombosis: What patients and caregivers need to know:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTm22RkQqk>

Downloadable pdfs:

Cancer-associated Thrombosis: What every patient with cancer needs to know

<https://thrombosiscanada.ca/cat-patient-info/>