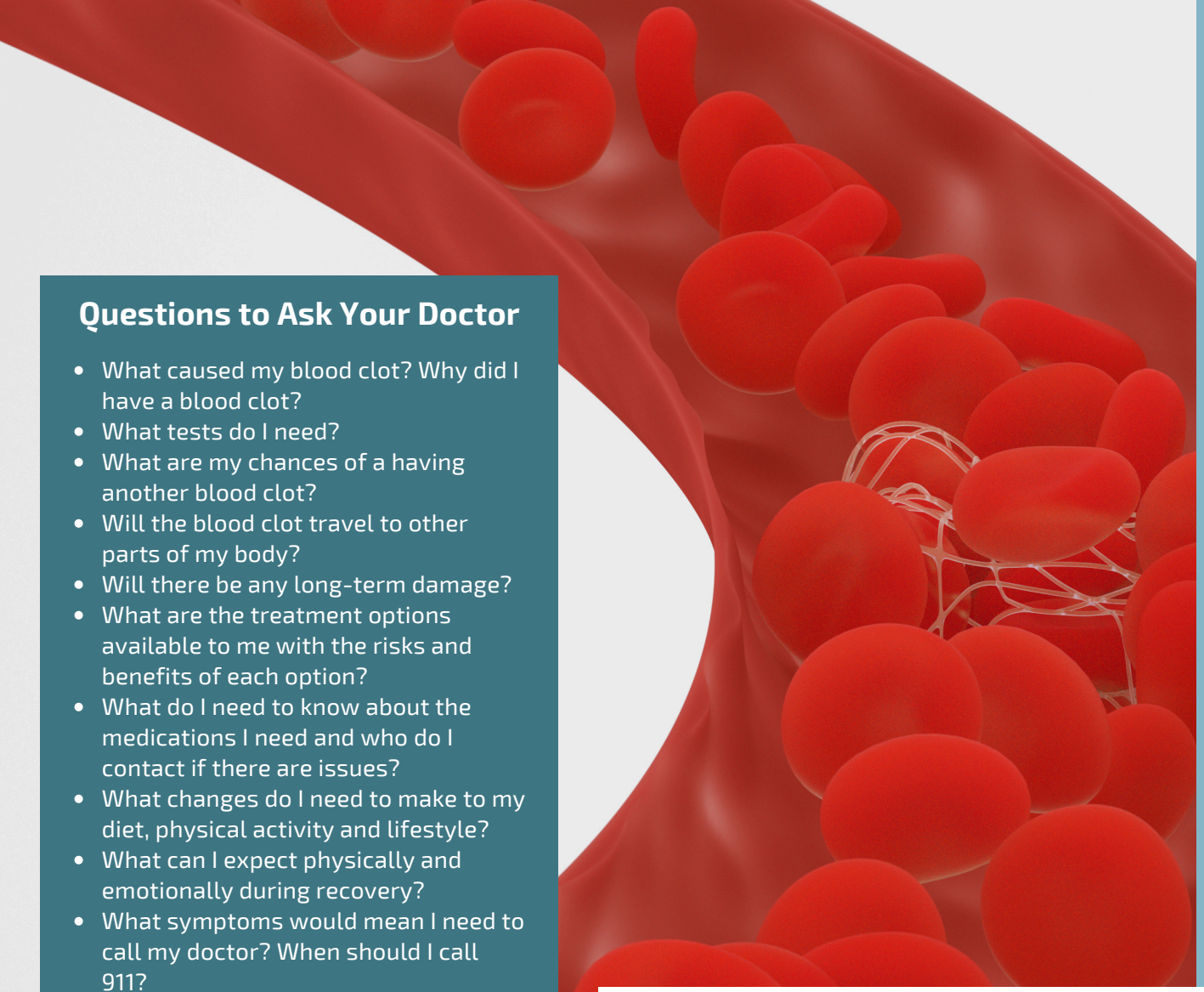

## Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- What caused my blood clot? Why did I have a blood clot?
- What tests do I need?
- What are my chances of a having another blood clot?
- Will the blood clot travel to other parts of my body?
- Will there be any long-term damage?
- What are the treatment options available to me with the risks and benefits of each option?
- What do I need to know about the medications I need and who do I contact if there are issues?
- What changes do I need to make to my diet, physical activity and lifestyle?
- What can I expect physically and emotionally during recovery?
- What symptoms would mean I need to call my doctor? When should I call 911?

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## Contact Us

If you would like to receive support or need more information, please contact us at:

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National Blood Clot Alliance
Stop The Clot®

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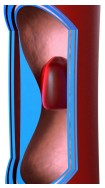
# Deep Vein Thrombosis & Pulmonary Embolism

The Mended Hearts, Inc.

National Blood Clot Alliance
Stop The Clot®

## Discussion Guide for Patients & Caregivers

## What are DVT & PE?



If you have been diagnosed with deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE) it's important to learn about blood clots, questions your can ask your doctor, and things you can do to reduce your risk of having another. Both are blood clots, so many things about them are similar, but the difference is their location in your body. Also, if you catch and treat a DVT, you often can prevent it from becoming a PE.

- **DVT** is a blood clot in the large veins of your arms or legs, often referred to as "in your extremities."
- **PE** is a blood clot that has broken off and has moved into your lungs. A PE can be life-threatening and must be treated quickly.

## What causes DVT & PE?

Sometimes there is no known cause of a blood clot (unprovoked), but other times there is an event or condition that may have caused your blood clot (provoked). Some of these are:

- Hospitalization for illness or surgery
- An accident, severe trauma or muscle injury, broken bone
- Sitting or lying down for long periods of time, especially with legs crossed
- Pregnancy and the post-partum period
- Hip or knee replacement surgery
- Oral contraceptives or hormone therapy

**Up to 900,000**

The approximate number of people affected by DVT & PE in the U.S. per year (the precise number is unknown)

cdc.gov

- Lifestyle-related—smoking or vaping, being overweight, etc.
- Age over 55
- Long-term diseases such as cancer, diabetes, heart or lung conditions
- Family history of blood clots or blood clotting disorders (thrombophilia)
- Dehydration
- COVID-19

## Treatment of DVT & PE

Treatment for your blood clot will depend on where it is in your body and how severe it is and may include:

- **Anticoagulants** are oral, injectable or intravenous medications that stop new clots from forming and existing clots from growing by decreasing the time it takes for blood to clot.
- **Compression stockings** are special elastic socks that help blood move out of the leg and back to the heart.

- **Clot-dissolving drugs or surgery** are used when the blood clot is very large and is not responding to other treatment.
- **Mechanical thrombectomy** is a non-surgical procedure for high-risk cases where the blood clot is removed by a device placed into your vein.

## Prevention

The highest risk of recurrence for blood clots is within the first 30 days. Be sure to follow your treatment plan, take all medication as prescribed, keep medical appointments and rest.

### Healthy Lifestyle

- when you can, after talking to your doctor, become physically active
- stop smoking if you smoke
- keep your weight in a healthy range
- keep yourself hydrated
- after a trauma, accident, surgery or illness, watch for clots

## Common Symptoms

The National Blood Clot Alliance uses **STOP CLOT** to help you remember the symptoms of a blood clot.

- **S**welling in the arm or leg
- **T**enderness or leg cramps
- **O**ut of breath
- **P**ass out or feeling lightheaded
- **C**hest pain or back pain when breathing
- **L**eg discoloration
- **O**verdrive or racing heart
- **T**ime to call for help! Dial 911 if you have any of these symptoms.