

Part of the IMF Patient Education Tools Series

Preventing Blood Clots and Thromboembolic Events With Novel Agents for Multiple Myeloma

Patient Education Sheet: Preventing Blood Clots and Thromboembolic Events With Novel Agents for Multiple Myeloma

KEY POINTS

Patients with cancer are at increased risk for developing blood clots (thromboembolic events). Patients with multiple myeloma may have an even higher risk of developing blood clots. Novel therapies used to treat myeloma include thalidomide and lenalidomide. These drugs, in combination with other medications, may increase the incidence of clots. Prevention of blood clots can reduce complications and contribute to successful treatment. Changes in your medication may be made by a healthcare provider based on your symptoms.

TYPES OF THROMBOEMBOLIC EVENTS

- Deep vein thrombosis (DVT): a small blood clot in the arm, leg, hand, or foot; DVT is the most common thromboembolic event.
- Pulmonary embolus (PE): a blood clot that travels to the lungs
- Cerebral infarction (stroke): a blood clot that travels to the brain

SYMPTOMS OF DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS

- Swelling, aching, pain, tightness, or a hard or soft lump in the arm, leg, hand, or foot
- Fast heartbeat
- Veins larger than usual (distended)

SYMPTOMS OF PULMONARY EMBOLUS

- Anxiety
- Fast heartbeat and fast breathing
- Chest pain or new onset of shortness of breath
- Coughing up blood

SYMPTOMS OF STROKE

- Change in emotional or mental behavior and confusion

Note. For more information, please contact the International Myeloma Foundation (1-800-452-CURE; www.myeloma.org). The foundation offers the Myeloma Manager™ Personal Care Assistant™ computer program to help patients and healthcare providers keep track of information and treatments. Visit <http://manager.myeloma.org> to download the free software.

Note. Patient education sheets were developed in June 2008 based on the International Myeloma Foundation Nurse Leadership Board's consensus guidelines. They may be reproduced for noncommercial use.

- Severe headache
- Chest pain
- Loss of coordination
- Sudden numbness or weakness

TREATMENT

- DVT, PE, and stroke are considered medical emergencies.
- Report any symptoms to your healthcare provider immediately.
- You will need regular examinations and may need to receive medications to prevent clots.
- The treatments or medications you receive will be based on your individual risk factors.
- Low-dose aspirin may be suggested if you have no risk factors or only one risk factor.
- Pills or injectable anticlotting drugs may be prescribed if you have more than one risk factor.

RISK FACTORS FOR CLOT FORMATION

- Lack of activity
- Obesity
- Smoking
- History of blood clots in you or your family
- Taking estrogen compounds (hormone replacement)
- Taking drugs to increase the amount of red blood cells, such as erythropoietin, epoetin alfa, or darbepoetin alfa
- Recent surgery
- Prolonged air travel

WAYS TO REDUCE CLOT RISK

- Exercise, such as walking, ankle circles, and knee to chest lifts.
- Lose weight.
- Stop smoking.
- Take medications prescribed by your healthcare providers.



INTERNATIONAL MYELOMA FOUNDATION
www.myeloma.org • 1-800-452-CURE (2873)