Things to consider when a patient is refusing prophylaxis...

- Have I discussed VTE and potential complications with my patient and his/her family?
- Have I discussed individualized VTE risk factors with my patient?
- Have I told the prescriber that the patient is refusing?
- Have I discussed alternative options with the prescriber (such as medications administered once daily)?

### Prophylaxis Contraindications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pharmacologic</th>
<th>Mechanical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active bleeding</td>
<td>Severe peripheral vascular disease (ABPI ≤ 0.5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thrombocytopenia (platelets &lt; 50,000)</td>
<td>Severe heart failure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hemophilia or other significant bleeding disorder</td>
<td>Compartment syndrome of the affected extremity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glycoprotein IIB/IIIA inhibitors</td>
<td>Fracture of affected extremity</td>
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<tr>
<td>High risk bleeding procedure</td>
<td>Local conditions such as: gangrene, recent skin graft, or open wound of the affected extremity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Severe trauma to head/spinal cord/extremities, with hemorrhage within last 24 hours</td>
<td>Known acute DVT of the affected extremity*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intracranial hemorrhage within the last year</td>
<td>*Not an established contraindication - remains controversial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastrointestinal/Genitourinary hemorrhage within last 3 months</td>
<td>Metastasis to the brain from specific cancers or intracranial monitoring device</td>
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*MHA HEN VTE Coordinating Center

Amy Brant, Nurse Coordinator
amynuhli@umich.edu

Carol Becker, Project Manager
cmizzi@umich.edu

Preventing Venous Thromboembolism (VTE)
Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) & Pulmonary Embolism (PE)

Pharmacologic & Mechanical Prophylaxis for Hospitalized Patients

Pharmacologic & Mechanical Prophylaxis for Hospitalized Patients

Insight for Healthcare Professionals

10/2012
VTE: Common, Deadly, Preventable

- Up to 600,000 individuals are affected by DVT/PE each year in the United States
- ≈ 100,000 Americans die each year due to VTE
- PE is the leading cause of preventable hospital death
- Sudden death is the first symptom in 25% of people who have a PE
- One-third of people with VTE will have recurrence within 10 years

Pharmacologic prophylaxis reduces the incidence of VTE by 50 to 65%

Most hospitalized patients have at least one risk factor for VTE*
- Age
- Active cancer
- Clotting disorder
- Recent trauma
- Recent surgery
- Myocardial infarction
- Stroke
- Acute infection
- Reduced mobility
- Heart failure
- Obesity
- Prior DVT/PE
- Family history of VTE
- Respiratory failure
- Hormonal medication
- Rheumatologic disease

*abbreviated list of VTE risk factors

Pharmacologic Prophylaxis

Acceptable Pharmacologic Prophylaxis

- Heparin 5,000 Units BID
- Heparin 5,000 Units TID
- Enoxaparin (Lovenox®) 40mg Daily
- Enoxaparin (Lovenox®) 30mg Daily (CrCl<30)
- Enoxaparin (Lovenox®) 30mg BID
- Dalteparin (Fragmin®) 5,000 Units Daily
- Fondaparinux (Arixtra®) 2.5mg Daily

- No evidence supports one pharmacologic agent over another in the medical population
- Choice of agent should be based on patient preference, compliance, ease of administration, and local factors (i.e. acquisition, cost)
- Bleeding secondary to pharmacologic prophylaxis is rare
- Heparin-Induced Thrombocytopenia (HIT) is a rare event, with an estimated incidence of 1-5%

Mechanical Prophylaxis

- Advantageous for patients at risk for VTE, but who are bleeding or at risk for bleeding
- May be used as an add-on therapy to pharmacologic prophylaxis in patients at very high risk (especially among surgical patients)

Mechanical Devices

- Intermittent pneumatic compression i.e. sequential compression devices (SCD)
- Graduated compression stockings
- Venous foot pumps

- Nurses hold a vital role in ensuring proper use of mechanical devices. The nurse should verify:
  1) Correct size stockings are selected
  2) Stockings are applied appropriately
  3) Stockings are worn all the time while the patient is in the bed or chair

SCDs do not prevent VTE while hanging on the end of the bed.

References