

HEALTH

Birth Control and Blood Clot Risks

NewsUSA

(NU) - There are more than 60 million women of child-bearing age in the United States, and the majority of them report using some form of birth control. In fact, the birth control pill is their number one choice. While research shows that birth control pills are safe and effective, just like any other medication, they can pose some risks, which is why all women should carefully evaluate their risks when considering birth control options.

One risk associated with birth control pills or any form of hormonal birth control that contains estrogen, including the pill, patch, or ring, is a life-threatening blood clot. The use of birth control pills with estrogen increases a woman's risk for blood clots three-fold, and some of the newer birth control pills women use pose a risk two-times greater than older birth control pills. The use of patches and rings containing estrogen poses a risk double that of birth control pills. Women with a clotting disorder, a previous blood clot, or a family history of blood clots are at an even greater risk.

Women considering the use of hormonal birth control should know their risk for blood clots and take these steps to reduce their risk:

- Complete the Risk Assessment on the website www.womenandbloodclots.org and discuss their results and birth control options with their doctor

- Talk to their doctor about any personal or family history of blood clots, and their existing risk for blood clots

Recognize Blood Clots Signs & Symptoms

It is important to recognize the signs and symptoms of blood clots



in the legs or arms. If you can recognize these signs and symptoms, you may be able to help save your life, or the life of a friend or family member:

- Swelling
- Pain or tenderness not caused by an injury
- Skin that is warm to the touch, red, or discolored

Blood clots in the legs or arms that are left untreated, or that break apart and travel to your lung can be deadly. Symptoms of a blood clot in your lung may include:

- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain that worsens with a deep breath or cough, coughing up blood
- Faster than normal or irregular heartbeat

Seek immediate medical attention if you experience any of these signs or symptoms.

In recognition of National Women's Health Week, the National Blood Clot Alliance and the Alexandra L. Rowan Memorial Foundation are providing women with essential information about birth control and blood clot risks by urging them to visit www.womenandbloodclots.org.