

Spreading the Word About Thrombosis

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World Thrombosis Day highlights thrombosis burden, symptoms, risk factors and more

Author: Alex Lindley | Reviewed by: Jennifer Gershman, PharmD, CPh

David Winter, MD, MSc, MACP



Dr. David Winter is board certified in internal medicine and is the current Chief Clinical Officer and Chairman of the Board of Health Texas Provider Network (HTPN).

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(dailyRx News) After fracturing her ankle and getting a cast, South African athlete Marie-Victoire Cumming began feeling extreme discomfort in her leg. What she didn't know was that she had a potentially life-threatening condition called deep vein thrombosis.

Cumming's story is one of many highlighted on the World Thrombosis Day website. The day is celebrated Oct. 13 to raise awareness of conditions tied to thrombosis.

While Cumming didn't initially know she had a blood clot in her leg, doctors found it and treated it. Now, the athlete is back at it. She has completed several cycling races since her blood clot and is now training for an Ironman triathlon.

"I'm feeling great now, more healthy and fit than I've ever felt," Cumming said, per the World Thrombosis Day website. "At the time, I had no idea how fatal this can often be. It wasn't until a couple of months later, after I had been discharged, that I realized I could have died. People should trust their instincts, and go with their gut feelings. Be in tune with your body and if something feels wrong, it is best to go to the hospital and get it checked."

Many patients are not as lucky as Cumming was. Around the world, 1 in 4 deaths is related to thrombosis, according to the World Thrombosis Day website. That's because blood clots pose serious health risks — they can lead to heart attack and stroke, among other problems.

"Thrombosis refers to a process in which blood transforms from a liquid into a solid," said David Winter, MD, chief clinical officer, president and chairman of the board of Baylor Health Care System's HealthTexas Provider Network, in an interview with RxWiki News. "It is important that this takes place to minimize blood loss from cuts and lacerations. It is not good when it occurs inside of our bodies and, under those circumstances, can interrupt the flow of blood to an organ. This is the common cause of heart attacks and strokes."

Dr. Winter added, "In otherwise healthy individuals, unwanted blood clots are more likely to occur with immobility and dehydration. Localized inflammation, such as after an operation or trauma to the body,

can also increase the possibility of an unwanted blood clot."

World Thrombosis Day's mission is to raise awareness about thrombosis-related health problems and reduce the condition's global health toll.

Surgeries, long hospital stays and physical trauma are all high-risk events that can lead to blood clots, according to the National Blood Clot Alliance. To reduce blood clot risk, patients can take the following steps:

- Keep cardiovascular and other health conditions under control, following your doctor's direction.
- Exercise regularly, even if you only take short walks.
- Lose weight if you are overweight or obese.
- Break up extended periods spent sitting still (such as driving, flying long distances or desk work) with short walks and stretches.
- Talk to your doctor about your risk factors and whether you need blood-thinning medications.

This year's event marks the second annual World Thrombosis Day.