



## *10 Reasons Why*

*These are the 10 reasons why the Venous Disease Coalition wants the general public to know about Venous Disease*

### 1. Venous Disease is VERY Common

**Venous Disease affects more than 25% of the adult U.S. population (more than 75 million people) and includes the following common disorders:**

- Deep Vein Thrombosis (“DVT”, formation of a blood clot in one or more veins, usually the leg veins), and its complication Pulmonary Embolism (“PE”, a DVT which breaks free from its original site in a vein and then travels through the heart into the lungs). These two related conditions are together known as Venous Thromboembolism or “VTE”.
- Other venous diseases include:
  - Varicose veins
  - Chronic venous insufficiency (CVI)
  - Post-thrombotic syndrome (PTS)

### 2. Venous Disease Costs the U.S. Economy over \$1 billion a Year

- Patients with Varicose Veins, CVI, and PTS suffer poor quality of life due to chronic symptoms which include leg swelling, heaviness/fatigue, pain, skin infections, and venous leg ulcers (open sores, which occur in about 500,000 Americans).
- Together these disorders occur in more than 20% of the adult U.S. population (over 60 million people) and cause venous leg ulcers in about 500,000 Americans.
- The medical treatment and work disability that results from these disorders cost the U.S. economy well over \$1 billion every year.

### 3. VTE is a Major Public Health Hazard

**VTE occurs in nearly 1 million Americans every year, many of whom are hospitalized due to these conditions.**

- About 300,000 Americans die of PE every year. Deaths from PE are five times more common than deaths from breast cancer, motor vehicle accidents, and AIDS combined.
- VTE is the 3rd most common vascular disease, after heart disease and stroke. Unlike those commonly known disorders, few Americans know what VTE is and how they can protect themselves and their family members from it.

### 4. ALL Americans are at Risk for Developing VTE

- VTE affects men, women, children, and is more common in the elderly.
- At particularly high risk are people who have had recent surgery, leg injury or major injury to another part of the body; people admitted to the hospital for medical illness; and cancer patients.
- In hospitalized patients, if active prevention efforts are not made, VTE develops in 10-20% of patients with a medical illness and in 30-50% of patients having major surgery.
- In healthy people, about 1 in 10 have a disorder (often inherited) of their blood clotting system which increases their chances of developing VTE in the future.

### 5. VTE is a Threat to Overseas U.S. Military Personnel

Because soldiers often experience major injuries, immobilization, and are subjected to prolonged air travel, they are at increased risk for Venous Thromboembolism.

## 6. VTE is a Women's issue too!

### Women are more likely to develop VTE than men.

- Pregnancy, use of birth control pills, and use of hormonal replacement therapy can place women at increased risk for VTE.
- PE is the #1 cause of death in U.S. pregnant women. VTE causes other complications in pregnancy including high blood pressure, miscarriage, stillbirth, and delivery of small babies.

## 7. Most Cases of VTE are Preventable

- Two-thirds of VTE cases occur during hospitalization for surgery or medical illness. Overwhelming evidence, based on hundreds of randomized clinical trials and endorsed by more than 20 physician guideline documents, shows that the vast majority of these cases can be prevented by proper use of anticoagulant drugs and/or mechanical devices.
- Despite this overwhelming evidence, these proven VTE prevention measures ARE NOT prescribed by physicians to most patients who are at risk for developing VTE.
- Despite this overwhelming evidence, most hospitals DO NOT routinely assess patients for their VTE risk and DO NOT routinely use these proven VTE prevention measures.
- As a result, PE is the most common cause of unexpected in-hospital deaths.

## 8. Timely Treatment of DVT can Prevent PE

Timely TREATMENT of DVT with blood-thinning drugs can prevent fatal Pulmonary Embolism. However, because few Americans know the common symptoms of DVT, they often present to a doctor's attention too late to benefit from this life-saving treatment.

## 9. VTE has been Recognized as a Preventable Public Health Treat

- In recent years, VTE has been identified as a major, preventable public health hazard by U.S. government representatives including the Surgeon General, the director of the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), and the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health care Organizations (JCAHO).
- In May 2006, the U.S. Surgeon General and NHLBI held a Workshop on DVT at which public education about VTE was explicitly recognized as a major public health need.

## 10. New Treatment Strategies for Venous Thromboembolism

The use of catheter-based interventions to rapidly eliminate blood clots and treat chronic venous insufficiency; the availability of new anticoagulant drugs; the ability to treat VTE as outpatients and treatments for varicose veins; and improvements in guidelines for proper use of anticoagulant drugs. Some of these show great promise to improve patient health, however many Americans are not considered for these treatments because they, or their treating physician, are not aware of them.

## About the VDC

The Venous Disease Coalition (VDC) is a collaborative network of professional and public organizations united by one mission to increase public and health professional awareness of venous disease. The VDC is a public and interdisciplinary consortium dedicated to promoting public and health professional awareness of venous disease.

The VDC is a program of the Vascular Disease Foundation, a national 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to reduce death and disability from vascular disease. More information may be found at [www.vdf.org](http://www.vdf.org)



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