

Suffered a Blood Clot, but Want to Continue Using Birth Control? What are Your Options?

Many women decide to use oral contraceptives or other birth control methods. What you might not be aware of is that certain birth control methods can potentially put you at a higher risk for a blood clot. This is because birth control methods containing estrogen operate by tricking the female body into believing that it is pregnant. The female body's natural reaction to this is to increase the body's clotting proteins. Although this increase in clotting proteins is beneficial for possible bleeding during birth, it poses a risk for women are not pregnant, but are prone to blood clots. We at the National Blood Clot Alliance want you to know your risk for blood clots, and know your options to decrease your risk.

Who is at risk for blood clots?

Those who have a higher risk of suffering a blood clot are people who have previously suffered a blood clot, have a family history of clotting, or have a clotting disorder. It is important to understand your risk for a clot, and this is why the National Blood Clot Alliance created a twenty question Risk Assessment for you and your loved ones to complete. The Risk Assessment analyzes your current and past medical history, and once it is completed, you can share it with your healthcare provider to discuss your safety regarding the use of birth control methods containing estrogen.

What other birth control options are there?

While birth control methods are not the direct cause of blood clots, those containing estrogen significantly increase your risk of suffering one. Fortunately, you can reduce your risk for developing a blood clot by switching to a different method of birth control. If you feel lost on deciding on a different form of birth control, speak with your doctor about the different forms. The NBCA has compiled a list of viable birth control options that do not increase your risk for clotting:

- barrier methods
- spermicides
- progestin implant
- copper IUD
- progestin IUD
- progestin-only pills
- tubal ligation or vasectomy for your partner

If you are at risk for blood clots and currently use a birth control containing estrogen, talk with your doctor about these alternative methods of birth control.

Blood clots are impartial to who they affect. For this reason, every woman should have a conversation with her healthcare provider to discuss her potential risk for blood clots, and whether hormonal birth control methods are suitable for her. If you do have a blood clot, your doctor can safely treat it.

More information about blood clots can be found at our website: www.stoptheclot.org.