



May 7, 2009

Dear Spirit of Women's Hospitals:

As the Acting Surgeon General, I am very pleased to see the great strides that your organization has made in raising awareness and education about Deep Vein Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolism (DVT and PE).

DVT and PE are often preventable. Estimates suggest that at least 100,000 deaths may be directly or indirectly related to DVT. Many factors can increase the probability that an individual will experience a DVT, including recent surgery and hospitalization. Other risk factors for DVT include, but are not limited to, age, obesity, infection, immobilization, tobacco use, pregnancy, and air travel. Women in particular can also be affected by hormone therapy. Specifically, contraceptives containing estrogen and progestin can increase the risk of a blood clot from two to eight times.

Highlighting this serious public health issue is an important step towards educating the public about DVT, recognizing its symptoms, and learning about ways to help prevent it. I am pleased to see that the Spirit of Women is taking this step by focusing on DVT in your upcoming Nation Executive meeting this June. The Office of the Surgeon General commends you for your efforts, and encourages you to continue to inform and educate the public about the health consequences of DVT. Early prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of DVT and PE are vital to decreasing the number of people affected by these conditions. Thank you very much for all your efforts!

Sincerely,

Steven K. Galson, M.D., M.P.H.
RADM, USPHS
Acting Surgeon General