

Testing for Genetic Causes of Blood Clotting Disorders

Things to Consider

Your doctor has talked to you about taking a blood test to see if you have a change in a gene (a polymorphism (pol-ee-mawr-fiz-um)) that makes it more likely you will develop a blood clot. The following are things you may want to think about before you decide if you want this test.

Pros

If you have a polymorphism:

- You and your doctor can make informed decisions about your care. For example, you may decide not to have an elective surgery. Women may choose not to use birth control pills.
- You can take medicine that lowers your chance of getting a blood clot if you have surgery, get pregnant, or are in other high-risk situations.
- If you know the signs of a blood clot you can call your doctor when the clot first forms. This may lower the chance that other health problems will occur.
- Some people feel like they have more control if they know there are things they can do to lower their risk. This might include watching their weight, exercising three times a week, not smoking, or not sitting for more than two hours at a time.

Cons

- Even if you have a polymorphism the chance you will have a blood clot is low. Most people with polymorphisms will never develop a blood clot.
- The medicine that stops a clot from forming has side effects. This is why it is only given to people who have had a clot. It is also given to people if they are more likely to get a clot. For example, if a person is having surgery, pregnant or injured. It is usually not given for a long period of time.
- There is no agreement on the best way to care for people with a polymorphism in high-risk situations like those described above.
- Knowing you have a polymorphism that makes blood clots more likely can be distressing for some people.
- Life, long-term care and disability insurance may cost more.
- Until 2009, when a law goes into effect, your health insurance may cost more. An employer may also use your test results when deciding who to hire.

Other Things to Consider:

- If you have a polymorphism there is a 50% chance that each of your children will inherit this polymorphism.
- If you have a polymorphism, you can share this information with other family members so they can be tested.