

# Testing for Genetic Causes of Blood Clotting Disorders

## Things to Consider

Your doctor has talked to you about doing a blood test to see if you have a change in a gene (a polymorphism (pol-ē-mōr'fizm)) that makes it more likely you will develop a blood clot. The following are some things you can think about before you decide if you want to have this test.

### Pros

*If you have a polymorphism:*

- You and your doctor can use this information to make 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 medication to lower 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 are more likely to get help sooner. This may lower your chance of other health problems.
- There are laws that will protect you from having to pay more for your health insurance if you never get a blood clot.
- Your boss cannot use this information against you.
- Some people feel like they have more control if they know there are things they can do to lower their risk, like:
  - watching their weight
  - exercising three times a week
  - not smoking
  - not sitting for more than two hours at a time.

### Cons

- Some people are upset when they find out that they are more likely to get a blood clot.
- People with a polymorphism may think about their health more often than people who do not know their risk.
- Even if you have a polymorphism, the chance you will have a blood clot is low.
- Drugs that stop clots from forming have side effects.
- If you have never had a clot, your chance of having problems if you take one of these drugs is higher than your chance of getting a blood clot.
- Doctors do not agree on the best way to care for people with a polymorphism in high-risk situations.
- If you have a polymorphism, you may pay more for:
  - life insurance
  - long-term care insurance, and
  - disability insurance.

### **Other Things to Consider:**

*If you have a polymorphism:*

- There is a 50% chance you will pass it on to each of your children.
- Your family members may want to be tested. If they do not have the polymorphism, the chance they will develop a blood clot is not increased.