

## Melanie's Corner



To me, the most inspiring part of being the national patient spokesperson for the Coalition to Prevent Deep-Vein Thrombosis (DVT) is knowing that by getting the message out we can help impact others lives. After all, how often do we get the chance to do work that can have such a profound impact?

I have a confession to make: In my first year as a DVT awareness advocate, I wasn't sure whether what I said and did would really make a difference. Would my story mean anything to other people? Would they listen? Then, gradually, I realized that they *were* listening, they *were* watching, they *were* logging on to the Web site. Wow!

The fact that we have now reached more than one billion people with DVT information continues to amaze me. Over the past couple of years I have learned how valuable and vital knowledge can be. And as I talk to my family, my friends and the many people I've encountered in my travels, I can see that our message is not only heard, but people are taking action.

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*"The Fact that we've now reached more than one billion people with DVT information continues to amaze me." Melanie Bloom*

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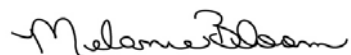
Here are a few personal stories of how we are continuing to reach people:

- This past March, as part of the third-annual DVT Awareness Month, I appeared on CNN's *Larry King Live*. One of the many people watching the segment was a neighbor of my parent's. After 20 minutes of hearing me discuss the symptoms of DVT, he suspected he might have DVT. He got up, left the house and drove himself to the emergency room, where doctors discovered he did have DVT and treated him for it.
- A friend of David's and mine experienced pains in her chest and a charley horse in one leg. The pains persisted, and over the course of a month, she visited her doctor several times and received a series of incorrect diagnoses. After remembering David's story, she demanded a PET scan, and it showed a pulmonary embolism, a complication of DVT. This mother of two says she "dodged a bullet" – that knowing David's story made her keep pushing for answers until she got the right diagnosis and the treatment she needed.
- Recently, I was booking an airline ticket for two long flights within a short period of time, and the booking agent told me to be sure to get up and walk around during the flights. Without knowing who I was, she said, "That widow of David Bloom talks about doing this to help prevent a DVT." Although I never would have chosen to be "that widow," it makes me feel good to know that people pay attention and remember what I say when I talk about DVT.

Stories like these above will continue to inspire me – and you too, I hope – as we go forward. Together, we can build on the momentum we have generated and find new ways to share our message, confident in the knowledge that we really can make a difference.

I look forward to sharing my stories with you and continuing to read about your DVT experiences – in the meantime continue to check back on the Coalition Web site for updates!

Best Wishes,



## PATIENT SPOTLIGHT: *DVT DIARIES & TERRY FRANCONA*



The Coalition is proud to introduce a new online resource entitled *DVT Diaries*. *DVT Diaries* are a continuing series designed to help reach new and current patients and spread awareness. *DVT Diaries* will allow for individuals to share their personal stories and to provide hope. *DVT Diaries* can be found online at [www.preventdvt.org](http://www.preventdvt.org), continue to check back as new chapters are released or register online to receive chapters via email.

Below please find an excerpt of our 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of *DVT Diaries* by Terry Francona, Boston Red Sox manager.

### **Preventing Deep-Vein Thrombosis: It's a Team Sport, Just Like Baseball**

**By Terry Francona  
Manager, Boston Red Sox**

... I learned the hard way that even top-tier athletes and people in the prime of life are not immune to health crises. You see, I am a very lucky two-time survivor of pulmonary embolism, a life-threatening complication of deep-vein thrombosis (DVT). It didn't matter that I was the manager of the 2004 World Champion Boston Red Sox. It didn't matter that I was relatively young, active and otherwise healthy. I was affected by DVT just like anybody else.

Initially, I thought I strained my leg muscle during a very light post-surgery workout. But just to be safe, I contacted my doctor. That simple phone call, and ongoing communication with my doctor, turned out to be critical. That's when my treatment for and education about DVT began.

On the team that I manage, my players have a good, ongoing relationship with our medical staff. We play 162 games and work together for nine months, day in and day out. Without question, the sustained interaction between the team and medical staff ensures that we have the health and endurance to play from pre- to post-season.

For me, simply knowing about my own DVT risk is not enough. Now, I am committed to helping others reduce their risk of experiencing this serious condition. I regularly hear from people like me who are eager to share their DVT experiences, and it's encouraging to hear how they have struck out DVT. It proves there is a way to win against this serious condition. And while I don't often share my personal DVT story with my players, they all know about it. To really make DVT prevention a winning effort, we must increase our awareness and knowledge of it, and we must maintain strong relationships with our healthcare providers. It's that "double play" of knowledge and communication that can best protect our health.

One thing I'm sure of: The more you know about your health, the more you will be prepared when life throws you the unexpected curve ball...

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*Yet, you're never too young, or too old, to learn more about the health-related "curve balls" that life can throw at you."*  
Terry Francona

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## DVT IN PRACTICE: *Medical Minutes*

In an exciting development that helps patients nationwide, the National Quality Forum (NQF), a leading healthcare quality measurement and reporting organization, has endorsed two performance measures establishing nationwide prevention standards for Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) for surgical patients.

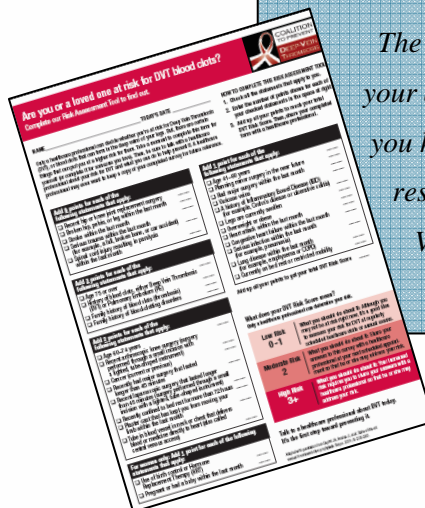
VTE, which includes DVT and its complication, pulmonary embolism, PE, is the most common preventable cause of hospital death. These new standards are a *vital new step forward in helping to reduce incidence of DVT nationwide*. Providing guidance to doctors and nurses on the frontlines of care, these measures enable the development of universal health care practices to improve the standard of care and reduce the risk of DVT.

The two NQF endorsed performance measures require proper risk reduction and treatment practices, and will serve as national standards for VTE prevention. The performance measures focus upon patients undergoing surgery and mandate the implementation of evidence-based measures. This is particularly important because surgery increases the risk of DVT.

Thus, VTE prophylaxis is undergoing a transition from voluntary to mandatory.

Watch the *Medical Minutes* column to keep abreast of exciting developments that advance the care and reduction of DVT.

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## Call to Action: *Learn about your Risk*

### *Some Risk Factors for DVT include:*

- ✓ Certain heart or respiratory diseases
- ✓ Cancer
- ✓ Prior DVT
- ✓ Advanced age
- ✓ Acute medical illness with restricted mobility
- ✓ Inherited or acquired predisposition to clotting
- ✓ Obesity
- ✓ Hospitalization
- ✓ Patients undergoing major surgery, such as joint replacements, who remain immobile in bed after an operation
- ✓ Pregnancy
- ✓ Restricted mobility caused by long-distance travel
- ✓ Use of birth control pills
- ✓ Postmenopausal hormone replacement therapy
- ✓ Trauma

*The best way to prevent DVT is to talk to your doctor about your risks, especially if you have cancer or certain heart or respiratory diseases.*

Visit [www.preventdvt.org](http://www.preventdvt.org) to learn more about your risk!