

heartnews

PROTECT YOUR CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM



The Clot Thickens!

A blood test can predict one's risk of recurrent clots by Phyllis McIntosh

Research has confirmed that a simple blood test can predict whether people who have had a blood clot called a VTE (venous thromboembolism), which usually occurs in the lungs or the veins in the lower extremities, are likely to develop another. The test measures the production of thrombin, a protein in blood that causes clotting. It can show with a greater degree of accuracy than other tests available if a person's blood is extra-likely to coagulate, which can result in deep vein thrombosis, says one of the study

authors, Paul Kyrle, M.D., of the Medical University of Vienna.

Dr. Kyrle's team followed 914 people for four years after they completed therapy for a first clot. They found that two-thirds of the subjects produced low levels of thrombin—and thus had a 60 percent lower risk of developing a second clot.

The test may make it possible for people at low risk of recurrent clots to avoid anticoagulant therapy, which can have serious side effects, including severe or fatal hemorrhaging.

Considering these risks, the researchers wrote in the journal *JAMA*, such patients "would almost certainly not benefit from indefinite anti-coagulant therapy." ■