INR In-Home Testing

Patients on warfarin need to get their INR levels measured regularly. This often involves visiting a local anticoagulation clinic or healthcare provider. However, in-home testing, also known as self-testing and point-of-care testing, is a great option that many patients are not aware of.

“I think a lot of patients don’t think of it as an option because they don’t really know about it,” explained Dr. Peter Collins, an advanced clinical practice pharmacist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. Dr. Collins works at Brigham and Women’s anticoagulation clinic, where he helps patients on warfarin get set up with in-home INR testing.

“Doctor’s offices, and even sometimes the anticoagulation clinics, don’t necessarily present it as an option,” he continued, acknowledging that there is no specific reason behind why in-home testing isn’t advertised to patients. “I think education would definitely get more patients involved with it.”

HOW DOES INR IN-HOME TESTING WORK?

1. First, patients interested in in-home testing must speak to the doctor who prescribes their warfarin and manages their anticoagulation. The doctor will help them decide if they are a good fit for in-home testing. If so, the doctor submits a form to a medical service company with the patient’s information.

There are a variety of companies that provide these machines. According to Dr. Collins, Brigham and Women’s Hospital works primarily with Alere to provide their patients with in-home testing services.

2. The medical service company will get patients set up with their machine and show them how to use it properly.

“Once the patient is determined to be a good candidate for self-testing, we go through a company that handles the testing of the INR results and the training,” explained Dr. Collins “They send a trainer out to the patient’s home to go over how to report the results and use the machine correctly. They also work with the patient’s health insurance to cover the machine.”

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After months of hard work, we are delighted to officially announce the launch of the new NATF website. The web address remains the same, www.NATFonline.org, but the experience is all new.

Our goal with the new website is to provide our visitors an easier way to learn about new advances in thrombosis, provide emotional support to patients, and keep people up-to-date about NATF’s educational and outreach programs. The new website is also easier to navigate and gives better access to the information you are looking for. We will be constantly updating our content with helpful information, articles, blogs, newsletters, announcements, and patient profiles, so be sure to check-in frequently.

In the true spirit of NATF, we have information for both patients and healthcare providers, which we hope will help facilitate more meaningful conversations between the two groups.

Speaking of conversations, the new site also features integrated social media buttons for Facebook and Twitter to foster improved communication with the NATF community.

We hope you find the new website fresh and modern. We worked hard to make sure the new website contains the important health information you need, but we are always looking for suggestions on ways to improve.

I look forward to hearing your feedback on the new website. I hope you find it useful, easy to use, and fun to engage with.

As always, thank you for your support of NATF, which makes things like our new website possible.

Warm regards,

Kathryn Mikkelsen
Executive Director

PATIENT PERSPECTIVE – MELISSA SHEA

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Letter from the Executive Director

Melissa’s experience with the Blood Clot Support Group inspired her to start her own support group for patients with SCAD.

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Finding Support in Chicago

Support groups for deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE) are an important part of post-diagnosis care for patients and their caregivers. They give patients an insight into how others have coped with the disease, serve as a safe place for them to discuss their anxieties after being diagnosed with a blood clot, and give them access to accurate and reliable information.

Here in Boston, NATF holds monthly online and in-person support group meetings, which take place at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. There are also other support groups across the country. One such support group is the NorthShore University HealthSystem’s Clot Aware support group, located in Chicago, IL.

CELEBRATING SIX YEARS OF SUCCESS

In June, the NorthShore University HealthSystem’s Clot Aware support group, hosted by Drs. Joseph Caprini and Alfonso Tafur, celebrated their six-year anniversary. NATF was proud to attend their Thank You Meeting on June 10, 2017. This exciting event was held to honor and recognize support group members.

The NorthShore University HealthSystem’s Clot Aware support group serves the Chicago, IL community. Similar to NATF’s Boston-based support group, it provides a supportive environment for patients to discuss their medical
Heart Healthy Recipe

Fall is in full swing. As the leaves continue to change color and temperatures begin to drop, warm yourself up with a bowl of hearty chicken noodle soup.

HEARTY CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP
From: American Heart Association’s Simple Cooking with Heart Program

This is a great recipe for people on the go. Just add the ingredients together in a crock-pot and leave them to cook. By the time you’re home from work, dinner is ready!

Ingredients:
- 1 pound of boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 3 cups of peeled, sliced carrots
- 3 cups of chopped celery
- 1 can of low-sodium chicken broth
- 6 cups of water
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 teaspoons of Italian spice blend
- 1 teaspoon of garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 cup of fresh dill
- 1 (12 ounce) bag of egg noodles, cooked

Recipe:
1. Place your chicken breasts at the bottom of the crock-pot. Then, add your carrots, celery, chicken broth, water, bay leaves, Italian spice blend, garlic powder, black pepper, and salt.
2. Cover your crock-pot. Cook your soup until the chicken is fully cooked. This can take 8 hours on low heat or 4 hours on high heat.
3. Take your bay leaves out of the soup.
4. Remove the chicken from the soup and place it into a medium bowl. While the chicken is out, stir in your dill. At this time, your crock-pot should be off, but you can leave the soup covered to keep it warm.
5. Once your chicken has cooled, cut it into bite-sized pieces. While doing this, cook your egg noodles.
6. Add your chicken back into the soup.
7. Place cooked egg noodles in serving bowls, and ladle soup over them.

Have a recipe you’d like to share? Email info@natfonline.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

BUILDING SUPPORT IN YOUR COMMUNITY

When Dr. Caprini began his support group in Chicago, he was inspired by the work of Dr. Samuel Goldhaber, his colleague and the president of NATF, Ruth Morrison, RN, and Kathryn Mikkelsen, executive director of NATF. Dr. Goldhaber and Ruth started their Boston-based support group over twenty-five years ago.

Today, NATF is striving to provide support across the United States and is looking for passionate doctors and patients to begin new support groups. Like the groups in Chicago and Boston, these new support groups will help not only provide support to patients and caregivers, but also spread awareness in their communities.

Are you interested in starting a blood clot support group in your community? Contact Kelly Meredith at kmeredith@natfonline.org

Interested in attending the Chicago support group meetings? Reach out to Nancy Lal at nlala@northshore.org. Patients, family members, and friends are welcome to attend.

Dr. Caprini and two support group members
NATF Welcomes High School Interns

Avanti Upad and Aryana Gavankar, high school seniors from Atlanta, GA, spent part of their summer vacation interning at the NATF office. In June, they joined us through a partnership with the Georgia Thrombosis Forum, an affiliate organization that works with young volunteers in Georgia to spread awareness of thrombosis. The students spent the month researching thrombosis awareness and helping NATF plan for World Thrombosis Day.

Here’s what Avanti and Aryana had to say:

“"The past four weeks working at the NATF Office have been insightful, knowledgeable, and navigable in many ways pertaining to exploring my interests, as a student. I learned a lot in my time at the office, specifically in the fields of research, marketing, and publications. I did this through several projects from creating brochures and researching about blood clots, to running booths to spread awareness for thrombosis.

I thoroughly enjoyed researching more behind thrombosis and hearing what others have to say about it both online and offline. If I had another opportunity to come back, I would definitely take it in a heartbeat!"

– Avanti

“"The time I spent as a summer intern in NATF was both insightful, as well as a wonderful learning experience. As a high school student, there are few times where we are able to interact with adults in a work environment. This internship taught me many skills and gave me an unforgettable experience.

The experience as an intern at NATF was very congenial. It was a comfortable working environment. I gained a proper understanding of a work environment, consisting of deadlines, steady yet focused individuals, and a receptive staff. This internship helped me develop my work ethic, patience, passion as well as dedication towards my work."

– Aryana

NATF would like to thank Avanti and Aryana for all of their hard work!

PATIENT PERSPECTIVE – MELISSA SHEA

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Melissa, can you tell us about the SCAD support group you started?

Because of the NATF Blood Clot Support Group, I had the idea that if it had helped me, it would certainly help other people. I reached out to my cardiologist to start another support group to help survivors of SCAD. We had our first meeting last week and over 50 people showed up. It was hugely successful. I explained to my cardiologist what we do at the NATF Blood Clot Support Group, and she just kind of followed those guidelines. It was a huge success, and I’m super proud of that.

Are there any last thoughts you’d like to share?

I would definitely like to say thank you to Dr. Goldhaber, Ruth, and the NATF staff for putting on support groups. I know that they must hear that a lot, but it’s been life-changing to go from having a lot of anxiety and questions and just having a real hard time dealing with it, to being able to come here, even once a month. The people of NATF have been great. So, I can’t thank them enough for all that they do.

And I hope that, with the new support group that I’ve begun with my cardiologist, maybe someday people will think that I’ve brought something similarly great to them.

I appreciate everything that NATF does. Dr. Goldhaber has been doing support groups for 25 years, and hopefully he does it for another 25 years, because I’ll be there.
Upcoming Events

2017 Celebration of Gratitude
“Going the Distance” For the North American Thrombosis Forum
October 18, 2017
Joseph B. Martin Conference Center
Boston, MA
NATF would like to invite you to join us for the 2017 Celebration of Gratitude, our new premier fundraising event. It will be an exciting night of inspiration, thanksgiving, and fun. First, join us for an evening cocktail hour and then hear from our guest speaker, Olympic medalist and blood clot survivor, Lynn Jennings. The evening will culminate with a dessert and champagne reception.

In-Person Blood Clot Support Group at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, MA
Oct. 24 and Nov. 28, 2017
Brigham and Women’s Hospital
Boston, MA
All support groups start at 7:00 p.m. and are held at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. To register, email Kathryn Mikkelsen at KMikkelsen@NATFonline.org or call 617-730-4120.

Online Blood Clot Support Group
Nov. 14 with Dr. Elaine Hylek – “Strategies to Minimize Bleeding Complications”
Dec. 12 with Dr. Suresh Vedantham – “An Update on Post-Thrombotic Syndrome”
NATF’s Online Blood Clot Support Group offers patients the opportunity to share common concerns, offer support to one-another, and to learn up-to-date and accurate information on research in the field of VTE. Dates and speakers for our upcoming meetings can be found at www.natfonline.org. To register for this online support group, please contact info@natfonline.org.

American Heart Association Scientific Sessions
November 13, 2017 7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. (dinner included)
Anaheim, CA
“Preventing Pulmonary Embolism and Stroke: A New Era of Enhanced DOAC Efficacy and Safety – Focus on Case-Based Cardiovascular Patient Management”

Avoiding the Avoidable: Pathways for VTE Prevention in the Vulnerable Medically Ill
December 2, 2017
Joseph B. Martin Conference Center
Boston, MA
NATF will be hosting a series of free programs, designed for medical professionals, that will center on protecting medically ill patients across the United States from VTE. Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and other healthcare providers are invited to join us for the opportunity to earn up to 2.75 CME credits. The event series will kick-off Dec. 2 in Boston, MA at the Joseph B. Martin Conference Center. Parking at the venue is included.

For more information on any of these events, visit www.natfonline.org/events, email events@natfonline.org, or call 617-730-4120. We look forward to hearing from you!