

Health Bulletin



New Help For Hip Fracture Patients

(NAPSA)—Many thousands of American lives may be saved every year, thanks to recent research at a Swedish university.

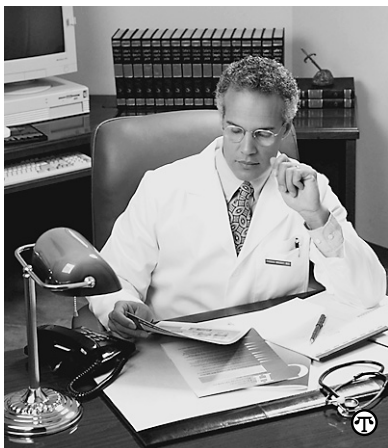
Fractured hips are a natural part of growing older, but many people don't know that a hip fracture can lead to serious health problems, such as deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE).

DVT occurs when a blood clot forms in the deep veins of the legs. If left untreated, the clot can break apart and move through the circulatory system to the lungs. If the clot is large enough, it can block circulation and cause a PE, a life-threatening condition that kills more than 100,000 Americans each year.

A new clinical study, recently featured in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, offers hope to hip fracture patients. Scientists at the Department of Orthopaedics at Goteborg University have found that hip fracture patients treated with a drug called Arixtra for four weeks were 96 percent less likely to develop DVT than patients treated for only one week.

Arixtra is a selective Factor Xa (ten "A") inhibitor, which allows normal clotting to occur, but prevents potentially harmful blood clots from forming in the deep veins of the leg.

"The effectiveness of extended use of this drug could change treatment strategies in patients undergoing hip fracture procedures because the risk of DVT and PE remain high for at least four weeks after surgery," said Barry J. Waldman, MD, Clinical Instructor, Orthopaedic Surgery, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.



Doctors are encouraged by a new treatment for hip fracture surgery patients.

This is important news for the more than 350,000 people the American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons says fracture a hip each year. Without preventative treatment with a drug like Arixtra, it is estimated that nearly half of those people would develop DVT, and up to 13 percent would develop a PE. "Extended prophylaxis represents a life-saving advance in antithrombotic therapy," said Waldman.

Recent events, such as the examples of "economy class syndrome" (the risk of developing DVT after long-distance flights in economy class seating) and the tragic death of NBC correspondent David Bloom, have drawn attention to DVT. While the condition can occur as the result of prolonged inactivity in cramped spaces, it is much more common as a complication of orthopedic surgery.

If you or someone you know is undergoing hip fracture surgery, call 1-866-ARIXTRA to see if Arixtra is right for you.