

Cesarean Delivery Thromboprophylaxis

Background

Pregnancy is a state of physiologic hypercoagulability. Pulmonary embolism is a leading cause of maternal mortality. The postpartum period is the time of highest risk for venous thromboembolic disease (VTE). Cesarean delivery, especially when performed emergently, is associated with a higher risk of VTE than vaginal delivery. VTE occurs in up to 0.7% of women undergoing the operation, most of whom are asymptomatic.

The use of intermittent pneumatic compression devices reduces the risk of VTE by at least 50%, and are a cost-effective (\$37 per device) intervention. Early ambulation is also to be encouraged. Low molecular weight heparin is considered the drug of choice for this situation because of the safety and efficacy profile. The recommended regimen for prophylactic low molecular weight heparin in high-risk women undergoing cesarean delivery is subcutaneous enoxaparin. Heparin pharmacokinetics in pregnancy are largely determined by renal clearance, not volume of distribution.

Risk Factors

Post-cesarean use of prophylactic low molecular weight heparin is not associated with an increased risk of postoperative bleeding (0.4%), but is accompanied by a small (0.1%) risk of heparin induced thrombocytopenia. While it is not recommended for low risk women undergoing cesarean delivery, it may be warranted for women with additional risk factors. The American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP) risk factors include:

ACCP, major risk factors

- strict bedrest for ≥ 1 week antepartum
- bleeding ≥ 1000 mL at cesarean
- previous VTE
- preeclampsia with fetal growth restriction
- antithrombin deficiency
- factor V Leiden (homozygous or heterozygous)
- prothrombin G20210A (homozygous or heterozygous)
- blood transfusion
- infection
- Lupus, heart disease
- Sickle cell disease

ACCP, minor risk factors

- BMI > 30 kg/m²
- multiple gestation
- postpartum hemorrhage > 1000 mL
- smoking > 10 cigarettes/day
- birth weight < 25 th centile
- protein C or S deficiency
- preeclampsia

I. Management: Short term

A. Baseline intervention

- Early ambulation
- Intermittent pneumatic compression devices

B. Pharmacologic thromboprophylaxis

Begin pharmacologic therapy if:

- One major ACCP risk factor for VTE
- or
- Two minor ACCP risk factors for VTE

Treatment will consist of:

BMI < 50 kg/M²

Enoxaparin (Lovenox) 40 mg subcutaneous q 12 hrs, starting 12 hrs post op

BMI > 50 kg/M²

Enoxaparin (Lovenox) 60 mg subcutaneous q 12 hrs, starting 12 hrs post op

B. High Risk

(multiple episodes of VTE, or anti-thrombin III deficiency)

Individualize care

Weight-based dosing is superior to fixed dosing, eg, enoxaparin 0.5 mg/kg every 12 hours

II. Management: Long term

A. Baseline intervention

Treatment in hospital only

B. High Risk

Care should be individualized

Warfarin, Enoxaparin, and antiplatelet agent therapy have been described in various clinical situations.

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