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DOCTORS SAID NIXON will need close medical attention for several months.

Sophisticated tests will be conducted this week to determine whether new clots are still being formed in the former President's left leg. If so, Dr. John Lungren said, there is a "very good chance" of surgery, in which case Nixon "would be unavailable over the long haul to make a court appearance." But if the tests are favorable, Nixon could be released by the end of the week from his second hospitalization in Long Beach, Calif., since he left office.

Two consulting physicians confirmed Lungren's diagnosis that the deep veins of Nixon's left leg are heavily clotted.

Ronald Ziegler, the former White House press secretary, said Nixon has lost eight or 10 pounds and is almost "chair-ridden," although he follows doctors' orders to the letter and thus walks a short distance each day. Ziegler added: "I don't think it's on the mark to say he's depressed."

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A major anticoagulant used to treat conditions such as phlebitis is in critically short supply at many hospitals. The drug, heparin, is made from hog intestines, and many packers find it more profitable to sell the intestines for pet food than for making the drug. Another drug in short supply is ampicillin, a synthetic penicillin.

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