

Nixon depressed and in pain

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LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Richard M. Nixon was reported on Thursday to be depressed and in heavy pain as his doctor weighed whether surgery is needed to combat the former president's phlebitis.

Dr. John C. Lungren said the decision on whether Nixon will need surgery will depend on whether hospital-administered anticoagulant drugs are successful in treating the inflamed veins which have painfully swollen Nixon's left leg.

In phlebitis surgery, the inflamed veins are often tied off.

"He came in last night for tests and didn't expect to stay," a source close to Nixon said. "They told him it was a very dangerous situation, and when they told him this he became very depressed and grumpy.

"Yesterday he was in very bad spirits. The clot situation is worse than they thought. He was having heavy pain. Unfortunately, he was working constantly

at home on his book and papers, so at least he'll get a rest here."

The source said allegations that Nixon may be using his illness to keep from testifying at the Watergate cover-up trial "really doesn't bother him at all. He doesn't care what people say."

"The thing he is really worried about now is his health," the source said.

The blood-clotting could threaten Nixon's life. A clot in his leg could break loose, travel through the bloodstream and lodge in his heart.

Nixon's hospitalization was unexpected. Lungren had maintained to newsmen that Nixon was doing well.

In a written statement Thursday, Lungren said Nixon was undergoing tests to determine if the former president is "in the small group of paradoxical cases, i.e., people for whom anticoagulation cannot be maintained by drugs." Lungren said Nixon was taking drugs orally and by injection to build up

his anticoagulant level to prevent more blood clots from forming.

Lungren said Nixon was admitted after three hours of diagnostic tests showed "defects or blockages of blood vessels" which could be caused by phlebitis-induced clots in the lower left leg. There was "near total occlusion, or blockage, of blood flow in the deep system of the thing," the doctor added. Lungren said there were new or old clots in the left thigh.

Anticoagulants prevent the formation of new clots but have little ability to dissolve existing clots.

A hospital spokesman said if nonsurgical treatment is successful in checking the phlebitis, Nixon may be able to leave the hospital late Friday or on Saturday.

After Nixon left the hospital Oct. 14 following 12 days of treatment, Lungren said the lung clot had disappeared naturally and that the phlebitis had responded well to treatment.