

Nixon Is Reportedly 'Depressed'

Long Beach

Richard M. Nixon yesterday was reported to be depressed and in heavy pain as his doctor considered whether surgery is needed to combat the former president's phlebitis.

Dr. John C. Lungren said the decision on whether Mr. Nixon will need surgery depends on how successful hospital-administered anti-coagulant drugs are in treating the inflamed veins that have painfully swollen Mr. Nixon's left leg.

"He came in last night for tests and didn't expect to stay," a source close to Mr. 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."

He said the allegation that

Mr. 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

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

Anti-coagulants prevent the formation of new clots but have little ability to dissolve existing clots.

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

Lungren said Mr. Nixon was admitted after three hours of diagnostic tests showed "defects of blockages of blood vessels" that 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 thigh," the doctor added. Lungren said there were new or old clots in the left thigh.

Lungren said there was "no evidence of any new involvement of the lung. During Mr. Nixon's previous hospitalization, a blood clot moved from his leg through his heart and lodged in his right lung.

A hospital spokesman said if nonsurgical treatment is successful in checking the phlebitis, Mr. Nixon may be able to leave the hospital late today or tomorrow.

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