

# NIXON'S DOCTORS DELAY OPERATION

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Anticoagulation Therapy to  
Be Used to Try to Avoid  
Dangerous Development  
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LONG BEACH, Calif., Oct. 24—Doctors have deferred surgery for former President Richard M. Nixon and decided to try to prevent potentially dangerous developments from his phlebitis with another round of anticoagulation, or blood-thinning, therapy, according to a medical source connected with the case.

The decision to defer an operation was made after a vascular surgeon, Dr. Eldon Hickman, examined Mr. Nixon at the Memorial Hospital Medical Center here. Because of complications that had developed in Mr. Nixon's phlebitis treatment, the former President was unexpectedly readmitted last night to the same hospital from which he was discharged three weeks ago.

The complications were not of an emergency nature, Dr. John C. Lungren, Mr. Nixon's chief physician, said.

Dr. Lungren said in a bulletin today that the former President was "undergoing intensive heparin and coumadin therapy as efforts continued today to build up the level of anticoagulants."

Though Mr. Nixon felt well, Dr. Lungren said that he con-

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sidered readmission "imperative" because blood tests had shown that the former President was responding poorly to high doses of coumadin. Mr. Nixon had been swallowing the coumadin pills to thin his blood since his discharge Oct. 4 after a 12-day stay at the same hospital.

Dr. Lungren also said that a venogram test had shown "that the deep femoral vein in the left leg is almost totally occluded" and disclosed "the presence of new or old clots in the deep venous system of the left thigh."

Dr. Lungren said that he suspected that the clots were new because a Doppler ultrasound test, which had given normal results during Mr. Nixon's previous admission, showed an abnormality consistent with a blood clot in his left leg.

Accordingly, Dr. Lungren said, he resumed heparin blood-thinning treatment but prescribed injections under the skin instead of into a vein at Mr. Nixon's insistence.

"If anticoagulant therapy cannot be adequately established and controlled, then surgical intervention is a real possibility," Dr. Lungren said.

The type of operation has not been chosen. In such cases, surgeons can make an incision in the abdomen and ligate (tie off) or plicate (pleat) the inferior vena cava. This is the main vein carrying oxygen-poor blood from the lower body. Or surgeons can insert an umbrella-shaped device through a vein elsewhere in the body.

The purpose of these surgical procedures is to prevent a blood clot that breaks off in the leg from traveling to the heart and then lodging in the lung. Large clots in the lung can be fatal. During Mr. Nixon's previous admission, doctors discovered that a small clot had lodged in his right lung.

Dr. Lungren also said that

"special studies are being conducted to see if Mr. Nixon is in the small group of paradoxical cases, i.e., people for whom anticoagulation cannot be maintained by drugs."

Mr. Nixon went to the hospital as an outpatient yesterday without plans for admission. Dr. Lungren said that in view of the inadequate response to coumadin therapy, he wanted to do the venogram and to repeat lung-scan tests two weeks earlier than scheduled.

Dr. Lungren had planned to do a venogram on Mr. Nixon's previous admission. But the specialist in internal medicine delayed the test for fear that an injection during the test might dislodge the clot, and that Mr. Nixon might develop an allergic reaction to the iodine used in the venogram.

Dr. Scott H. M. Driscoll, a radiologist, did the venogram at the hospital. In this test, an iodine solution is injected into a foot vein. Iodine is radio-opaque, so as it circulates with the blood, the entire venous system of the leg from the foot to the groin can be outlined in a series of x-rays.

Although Dr. Lungren said that he had increased Mr. Nixon's daily dose of coumadin from 12 to 20 milligrams, a relatively high daily dose, results of a time test that is used to guide such therapy showed that Mr. Nixon's blood had not been thinned to the level that Dr. Lungren desired.