

Medical update, 5/28/81

Tuesday's protime test (clotting time of blood) was extraordinarily slow, ~~25.4~~ 25.4 seconds (base of 10) compared with ~~17.9~~ 17.9 the week before. I hemorrhaged at 21 in 1979, so the doctor and I were concerned. Skipped the anti-coagulant for a day and today's test, prior to taking the anticoagulant, was exactly where the doctors want it. Nobody has any idea about why there could be so radical a shift, into a ~~danger~~ danger area. The only new medication, penicillin VK, is not supposed to ~~do~~ have anything to do with the clotting time of the anticoagulant. I took the last of the prescribed penicillin last ~~week~~, which will permit discovery of whether or not it had the effect.

I'll be getting blood tests more often and we've worked out a simple system which will permit me to monitor the level after the testing and before taking the anticoagulant without waiting for the results to be phoned to the doctor and for me to be able to get him on the phone. I'll wait at the Lab each day and will get the report and take ~~it~~ it to the doctor. If the level is off, I can not take the anticoagulant until after I can reach him. This week, when I didn't know the time was in the danger area, as soon as I got home I took the stuff, and it is prescribed at a high level. ~~It~~ It led to the danger, but nothing happened.

The swelling in the left leg and thigh are not reduced. If anything, at least some places are more swollen. However, the local doctor does not believe there is an infection from its appearance and the absence of any fever. There is a scab still over one of the holes of one of the stitches. This began to weep about a month after that surgery but the weeping stopped in two days and the scab formed. When I was back at Georgetown 10 days ago the surgeon removed the scab and made some kind of examination. He did not say there was any infection and I think he prescribed the penicillin merely as a precaution. I return there on the 3rd, for checking only.

I feel as I have, save perhaps that I'm a bit more tired and am tired for no apparent reason fairly often. I'm not yet able to walk with much continuity but little by little I am walking more, meaning more often. Baseball games, which I find good relaxers, help because I get up and walk at the end of each half inning, to all the commercials, and where there are such things as pitcher changes. Besides, the Orioles games have been interesting and somewhat exciting. Continuous walking - by the time I've gone to the mailbox and back (200 yards) I'm glad to be back and am generally fairly uncomfortable. With rest it passes off fairly rapidly.

The head of the Lab, who has run many, many tests and knows of more, was reassuring. He says the protime can jump around a lot and provide no clue as to why.

Before I got the results of the test that was bad subconsciously I'd rubbed a few places on the backs of the hands and forearms that itched, kind of subconsciously, without being aware of it. The skin didn't break and blood didn't run ~~or ooze~~, but there sure was a lot of subcutaneous bleeding. Odd feeling! It can take very little to make one bleed.