

WHAT IS ANTIPHOSPHOLIPID SYNDROME (APS)

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APS is an autoimmune disorder where the body makes antibodies that cause the blood to form clots when it should not. These clots can block blood vessels and lead to serious health problems.

WHO GETS APS?

APS is not very common. It affects 1 out of every 2,000 people in the U.S. It happens more in people who have an autoimmune disease like lupus. It is also much more common in women. About 70% of people with APS are women.

HOW IS APS DIAGNOSED?

Doctors can diagnose APS with a blood test that looks for certain antibodies. Because APS is rare, doctors do not test everyone for it. You should tell your doctor if you have a history of lupus, blood clots, or miscarriages. Your doctor may then order tests or send you to a specialist if needed.

WHAT HEALTH PROBLEMS CAN APS CAUSE?

APS can cause blood clots that lead to stroke, especially in young people. It can also cause serious problems in pregnancy.

IS THERE A CURE FOR APS?

There is no cure for APS, but medicines like blood thinners or aspirin can lower the risk of blood clots related to APS.

WHAT SHOULD PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT APS IN PREGNANCY?

APS is often first diagnosed during pregnancy. It is found in 5-20% of people who have repeated pregnancy loss at 10 weeks or after. APS can also lead to early preeclampsia (before 34 weeks), which causes dangerously high blood pressure in pregnancy. It can also affect the growth of the unborn baby. Doctors may prescribe blood thinners that are safe in pregnancy to help lower the risks.

DOES APS AFFECT MY BIRTH CONTROL CHOICES?

There are many types of birth control that are safe for people with APS. This includes hormonal IUDs, low-dose progestin implants and pills. Non-hormonal options are also safe. But birth control that has estrogen (like some pills, the patch, and the ring) should be avoided because it increases the risk of blood clots. Depo may also increase clot risk, so it should be carefully discussed with a specialist.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT APS?

The APS Foundation of America has more information on this important health topic.

Antiphospholipid Foundation of America:
https://apsfa.org/aps/

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

- **American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists – Practice Bulletin 132, Antiphospholipid Syndrome (December 2012):** https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-bulletin/articles/2012/12/antiphospholipid-syndrome
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – U.S. Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use (August 2024):** https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/rr/rr7304a1.htm

County of Los Angeles Public Health