American Society of Hematology
Tips for Avoiding Blood Clots When Traveling

1. **I've heard that air travel increases your risk of developing a blood clot. Is this true?**
   Yes, you do have an increased risk of developing a blood clot when you travel on an airplane or when you sit for long periods of time.

2. **Why am I more likely to form a blood clot during travel?**
   Your risk increases when you travel because you are immobile for long periods of time, often sitting in a cramped space with little leg room. Because of the resulting restriction of circulation, blood clots can form in the deep veins of your legs. In addition, air travel can cause dehydration, which can contribute to the formation of a blood clot.

3. **Are airplane passengers the only travelers at risk of developing a blood clot?**
   No. Any person faces an increased risk of forming a blood clot when confined to a small space for an extended period of time. However, air travel presents a notably higher risk because flying causes dehydration, which is bad for circulation. This combination of dehydration and immobility increases your chances of developing a blood clot.

4. **Are some people more at risk of developing a blood clot?**
   Yes. Overall health and genetic history can put some people at greater risk of developing a blood clot. Women who use oral contraceptives or who are pregnant have an increased risk, as are people with inherited clotting disorders or a family history of blood clots. Obesity and older age are other factors that increase your risk.

5. **How will I know that a blood clot has formed in my legs?**
   If you notice swelling of the leg, ankle, or calf, redness or discoloration, and/or increased warmth over the skin, you may have a blood clot. Seek medical attention immediately so that it can be accurately determined if a blood clot is present.

6. **What are some tips for preventing blood clots during air travel?**
   - Make sure to stretch your legs and get some exercise. You can do this by walking up and down the aisle on the plane every few hours, stretching out your legs, rotating your feet, and changing positions in your seat.
   - Drink plenty of fluids, but avoid alcoholic beverages before and during travel.
   - If possible, store your carry-on baggage in a place that will give you some leg room.
   - Wear loose-fitting clothes.