

Video transcript: Know your enemy – Haemorrhage

Hi, welcome to another Museum of Human Disease “Know Your Enemy” video.

A haemorrhage is the rupture of a blood vessel causing bleeding. This can be external, flowing out of the skin, or internal. Haemorrhage can be caused by injury or disease.

Here a ruptured abdominal aorta, or in the brain here and here. Your body’s response to a haemorrhage is to try to stop the leak. Platelets and proteins called clotting factors travel to the leak and make the blood thicker and more jelly-like, eventually forming a plug we call a clot. On the skin, this dries to form a scab.

The medical term for a clot is a thrombus. Here in the kidney, a vein leading to the heart, and the carotid artery in the neck, or the notorious deep vein thrombosis from the leg. If the thrombus breaks away from where it forms and moves through the blood vessels, it will eventually lodge in and block a smaller vessel. Then it is called an embolism, maybe in the lungs, the heart, and this is the DVT which travelled to the lung of an airline passenger becoming an embolism and causing their death. Move and stretch on that long haul flight.

Clots can form more easily when a person uses tobacco, has high cholesterol, is overweight, has cancer, has diabetes, is stressed or has an inactive lifestyle. These are your enemies.