

Going Home

You may be prescribed an anticoagulant to take for a while whilst at home. It is very important to complete the course. You may also need to continue using anti-embolism stockings whilst at home

If you have any problems with these treatments, such as leg ulcers, leg swelling, problems with injection site, or excessive bruising / bleeding you should seek medical advice either from your GP or contact the nearest Emergency Department in an emergency situation

You should continue to walk about as much as possible while at home and drink plenty of water to keep hydrated.

Maintain a healthy weight.

Be aware that your risk of developing blood clots can continue for up to 3 months after you have gone home.

Further Information

Speak to your medical or nursing team whilst in hospital if you have any concerns or questions.

Useful websites

www.stoptheclot.com

www.thrombosis-charity.org.uk

www.nhsdirect.uk

Alternatively your own GP surgery



This leaflet is available in large print and other formats and languages.

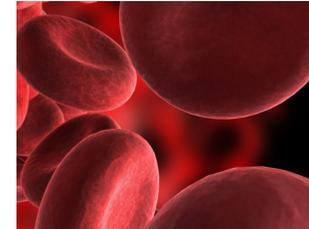
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Information for Patients

Hospital acquired blood clots



VTE (Venous Thromboembolism)

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) and Pulmonary Embolism (PE)

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Blood Clots

To stop us bleeding, our bodies start a blood clotting mechanism to form a clot.

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) is the name given to a blood clot which forms inside a vein when not bleeding, leading to partially or completely blocked circulation. A DVT can cause many ongoing health problems.

The clot can break off and travel toward the heart and become lodged in one of the arteries of the lung which is called a pulmonary embolism (PE). This can result in breathing difficulties and can be fatal. The collective name for DVT and PE is Venous Thromboembolism (VTE)

Who is at risk of Blood Clots?

Every patient in hospital has some increased risk for blood clots and this increases with reduced mobility, especially if having an operation or unwell enough to be confined to bed.

Your risk of developing blood clots will be assessed either in a pre-admission clinic or when you are admitted to hospital. The risk is higher if:

There is a family or personal history of Blood Clots (DVT or PE).

You have suffered heart disease or have another serious medical condition e.g. stroke

You have cancer

You take certain medications such as contraceptive pill or HRT

You are aged over 60

You have been on a journey for over 3 hours in the 4 weeks before admission

You have varicose veins

You are very overweight

You are pregnant

How can Blood Clots be prevented?

Not all blood clots can be prevented but the risk can be significantly reduced by about two thirds with appropriate precautions and treatment.

If you are considered to be at risk, a small injection of a drug called heparin may be given on a daily basis. This helps prevent your blood from clotting too quickly. Possible side effects can be bruising at the injection site and prolonged bleeding from any cut to the skin

If you are having a total knee or hip replacement, you may be prescribed a blood thinning tablet to take instead of an injection. This treatment may be given to other patients in the future.

You may also be advised to wear anti-embolism stockings if appropriate. You will be measured for these stockings and shown how to wear them. You should report any new symptoms in your legs whilst wearing these, such as pain, discoloration or rashes.

You may also be asked to wear a special inflatable sleeve or cuff around your lower leg or foot while in bed. This inflates

automatically and provides pressure at regular intervals. Any new symptoms in your legs or feet should be reported to your doctor or nurse.

What Can I Do to Help?

Keep mobile even while in bed. Leg exercises are useful. Ask for a physiotherapist or nurse to help if necessary

Ensure any stockings or foot / leg pumps you have been given are worn as much as possible.

Drink plenty of fluid, to keep hydrated, if that is allowed.

Ask your doctor or nurse **“What has been done to reduce my risk of Blood Clots?”**

What are the symptoms of Blood Clots?

Typical symptoms are, leg swelling, pain, calf tenderness and occasionally heat and redness.

Other symptoms include chest pain, breathlessness and coughing up blood.

If you develop any of these symptoms you should seek medical advice straightaway.

Treatment of Blood Clots

Treatment is very effective especially if the clot is recognised early and prevents it from spreading

You may be required to take medication for an extended period following hospital discharge.