Preventing hospital associated blood clots

This leaflet explains more about blood clots which can form after illness and surgery

What are hospital associated blood clots?

These are blood clots which occur in patients when they are in hospital and up to 90 days after a hospital admission.

There are 2 kinds:

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT): This is a clot (also known as a thrombosis) that forms in a deep vein, most commonly in your leg or pelvis. It may cause no symptoms at all or cause, swelling, redness and cramping pain.

Pulmonary embolism (PE): if a clot moves through your blood vessels it can become stuck in your lungs, this is called a PE. Symptoms include sudden onset of breathing difficulty, fainting, coughing up blood, and chest pain (usually worse on breathing in).

Health professionals use the term **venous thromboembolism (VTE)**, to cover both DVT and PE.

Are blood clots common?

Every year thousands of people in the UK develop a VTE and this is a serious, potentially fatal, medical condition.

Although serious, most blood clots can be completely avoided. The key is to be aware if you're at risk and take some simple preventative steps.

Your risk will be assessed and if you are at risk your doctor or nurse will talk with you about what will be done to offer you protection against clots.

Who gets blood clots?

Anyone can get a blood clot, but you're more at risk if you can't move around much or if you're unwell. You may have heard blood clots linked to long-haul plane journeys or the contraceptive pill but most blood clots actually develop during or just after a stay in hospital.

Your risk is also increased if you:

- are over 60 years old
- are overweight or obese
- have had a blood clot before
- suffer from a medical illness such as heart failure, respiratory failure or an inflammatory bowel or joint problem
- are having hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- are pregnant or have recently given birth
- are dehydrated
- have cancer or are receiving cancer related treatment
- have a condition that causes your blood to clot more easily than normal, such as antiphospholipid syndrome.

compassionate care

What can be done to reduce my risk?

You can help yourself before coming into hospital by:

- trying to lose any excess weight
- keeping as mobile as you can
- talking to your doctor if you take HRT or the combined contraceptive pill – you may need to stop them a few weeks before being admitted into hospital

While in hospital

While you're in hospital, you will reduce your chances of a blood clot if you:

- drink plenty of fluids to keep hydrated
- if you have been advised to wear stockings please wear them day and night for the recommended time (except when washing)
- wear any other compression devices you've been given
- take any blood-thinning medicines you've been offered. Some of these medicines are of animal origin. If you have any concerns about receiving any of these medicines please speak to a doctor or nurse looking after you.
- get up and move around as soon as you're advised to.

What happens when I go home?

Until you return to your usual levels of activity you may need to wear stockings or take blood-thinning medicines after you go home. Your nurse will explain what you will need to do. You should also take care to stay as mobile as possible and keep yourself well hydrated.

If you have any questions or concerns make sure you speak to a nurse before you leave.

If you develop any signs or symptoms of a clot seek medical advice immediately, either from your GP or your nearest hospital Accident and Emergency department.

If you have any comments about this leaflet you can contact :

Anticoagulant Pharmacist, Pharmacy Department
Huddersfield Royal Infirmary
Telephone No: 01484 355767

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪਾਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ,
ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ یا زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو
براہِ مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم المذكور أعلاه"