

Venous Thromboembolism

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format
please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

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لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formie,
proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil,
vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe
de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق
يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

Southport & Formby Hospital
Town Lane, Kew,
Southport, Merseyside,
PR8 6PN
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

Ormskirk Hospital Dicconson Way,
Wigan Road,
Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2AZ
Telephone: 01695 577 111

www.MerseyWestLancs.co.uk

Author: Vte/Anticoagulation Nurse Specialist
Department: Vte Clinic
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Introduction

An estimated 25,000 people die in the UK from preventable hospital-acquired venous thromboembolism (VTE) every year. VTE is a condition in which the blood clot (a thrombus) forms in a vein.

It commonly occurs in the deep veins of the legs; this is called a deep vein thrombosis (DVT). The thrombus can come free and travel to the lung as a potentially fatal pulmonary embolism.

This leaflet contains information on the risk of a DVT occurring whilst having treatment in hospital and has been provided so that you, and with your agreement, your family and carers have an opportunity to reach informed decisions about your care.

Preventing Venous Thromboembolism In Hospital

Just being unwell in hospital can lead to an increased risk of developing DVT. So, if you're going into hospital you will usually have an assessment to check your risk of developing DVT.

You may be asked questions to check for known risk factors. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, you might be offered treatment to keep your risk of developing a DVT whilst in hospital as low as possible.

Special Instructions For After You Have Left Hospital

Any Condition Specific Danger Signals To Look Out For:

Leg swelling, redness and pain.

Acute shortness of breath, chest pain or coughing blood.

Contact Information If You Are Worried About Your Condition After You Have Left Hospital

If you encounter a problem using VTE treatment please seek advice from ward staff or clinical team.

Other Useful Telephone Numbers/Contacts:

Southport and Formby District Hospital 01704 547471
NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) - 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) - 0800 328 6297

With pharmacological VTE prevention.

- Please adhere to the information given on the patient information leaflet provided with your take home medication.

If you encounter a problem using any VTE treatment at home please seek advice from a member of the ward clinical team.

When Should I Seek Medical Help After Discharge Home?

Leg swelling, redness, and pain may be indicators of a blood clot and should not be ignored. Although not necessarily a result of DVT, if you have these symptoms you should visit your GP.

If you have breathing problems or chest pain you should seek urgent medical attention.

You may be given anticoagulant medicines, or be asked to wear compression stockings. You may also be given a mechanical pump to use on your feet and legs in the first few days after an operation or whilst experiencing a period of immobility.

This is called an intermittent compression device. The pump automatically squeezes your feet and lower legs to help your blood circulate.

Is There Anything I Can Do?

There are a number of risk factors associated with DVT:

Immobility - this causes stasis of blood which leads to clot formation.

To reduce this risk:

- Sit out in a chair and mobilise as early as possible or when you are allowed to, regularly take deep breaths and where possible move your feet and ankles to improve the leg circulation.
- Do not cross your legs in bed.

Dehydration – causes blood vessels to narrow and blood to clot more readily.

To reduce this risk:

- Drink plenty of fluids to keep well hydrated (unless advised not to take oral fluids by medical staff or the clinical team).

Smoking – smoking damages all blood vessels.

To reduce this risk:

- Try to stop smoking. Help is available within the hospital. Ask your nurse to refer you to the Smoking Cessation Counsellor.

Obesity – being overweight reduces the flow of blood through the vessels.

To reduce the risk:

- Try to lose weight.

Anyone being admitted to hospital is advised to ask the following questions:

- What is the risk of DVT during my stay, with and without appropriate prevention?
- Will I be given anti-embolic stockings?
- Should I receive blood thinners after surgery?
- Does the hospital have ultrasound facilities on site to diagnose DVT if I should develop one?
- If I develop a DVT how will I be treated?
- Please ask your doctor or nurse if you have any other questions/concerns

Will I Need Treatment To Prevent VTE After Discharge?

Sometimes the medical staff will recommend that VTE preventative treatment be continued after discharge from hospital. It is important that you adhere to any guidance given, whether oral or written, on the particular type of treatment prescribed.

With anti-embolism stockings:

- Only use the stockings that were provided for you and that you were measured for and fitted with.
- Ensure you know how to put the anti embolic stockings on correctly to ensure a reduction in the risk of developing VTE. (a trained member of the clinical staff will be happy to go through this process again with you)
- Wear the stockings day and night until your mobility is not still significantly reduced.
- Remove the stockings as a minimum daily for hygiene purposes and to inspect skin condition. If you have significant reduction in mobility, poor, skin integrity or sensory loss, the skin should be inspected two or three times per day, particularly over heels and bony prominences.
- Discontinue use of stockings if there is marking, blistering or discolouration of the skin, particularly over heels and bony prominences, or if you have pain or discomfort, and seek medical advice.