

What happens if I don't need treatment?

If your health professional has decided that you do not need any anticoagulation medication, this is because you are at low risk of developing a blood clot. It is still important for you to be aware of the signs and symptoms of VTE, how to reduce your risk and where to seek help if you have any concerns.

How can my risk of developing a VTE be reduced?

- Stay as active as possible, if you are unable to walk try to move your legs, feet and circle your ankle as often as possible
- Take regular fluids
- If travelling make sure you move your legs regularly and take a break and walk around.

What should I do if I develop any signs of symptoms of a blood clot (VTE)?

You should seek medical assistance immediately by attending your local Emergency Department or dial 999 for an ambulance if you develop any shortness of breath or chest pain.

Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/ department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

TRUST VALUES: We CARE for...
our patients... each other... ourselves

BEHAVIOURS:

- Courtesy and respect
- Attentively kind and helpful
- Responsive communication
- Effective and professional

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IN TRAN communication for all
The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.
For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240

Author: Georgia Grimmer,
Advanced Nurse Practitioner

Reducing the risk of a blood clot when you have a lower limb immobilisation



Patient Information

A blood clot or Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) can be a complication of having a lower limb immobilised following a fracture or injury. The following information has been written to explain signs, symptoms, prevention and treatment if you develop a blood clot.

What is Venous Thromboembolism (VTE)?

VTE is the collective name for Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and Pulmonary Embolism (PE).

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot that forms in the deep veins of the legs and pelvis, although they can also occur in other areas of the body. A blood clot can dislodge and travel into the blood stream; where it can travel to an artery in the lungs causing a Pulmonary Embolism (PE).

Signs and symptoms of a DVT

- Swelling to limb
- Pain/tenderness to limb
- Colour or temperature change to limb
- Vein distention

Signs of symptoms of a PE

- Sudden shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Fast heart rate
- Coughing up blood

If you experience any of these symptoms you should attend a hospital as soon as possible, dial 111 or in an emergency dial 999.

Who is at risk of VTE following a lower limb injury?

- You are over 60 years old
- Personal or family history of VTE
- Active cancer
- Recent surgery
- You have a condition that makes your blood more likely to clot
- Overweight – Body Mass Index (BMI) greater than 30
- You are a known suffer from a chronic medical condition
- Use of hormone replacement therapy
- Use of oestrogen containing contraceptive therapy
- Inflamed varicose veins (phlebitis)
- Pregnant or recently given birth

Am I at risk?

If you have a lower limb immobilised in a plaster cast, walking boot or splint you might be considered at risk of a VTE. A healthcare professional will complete a risk assessment with you, to work out your individual risk; they take the following into consideration:

- The type of injury
- Your risk factors for VTE
- Your risk of bleeding if treatment is prescribed
- Other medications you might be taking

If you are considered to be at risk of a VTE, this will be discussed with you and you may be prescribed an anticoagulant.

The development of a blood clot can be life threatening. If you are prescribed treatment, it is important that you fully understand the potentially dangerous implications should you choose not to start the medication.

What are the possible side effects from the treatment?

As with all medicines, the anticoagulation medications can have side effects, the most common effect is that you may bruise and bleed more easily.

Allergic reactions are also possible. These can include facial swelling, difficulty breathing or a rash. If you suspect that you are having an allergic reaction to the medication, you need to seek medical assistance from your local emergency department or 111.

It is also important that you read the information leaflet provided alongside the medication prescribed.

How long is the prophylaxis treatment required for?

The usual duration is until you start weight bearing. In most cases it is about 6–8 weeks, however it could be longer. Your treating doctor will guide you when to stop taking the medication.

A sharps bin will be provided to enable you to safely dispose of needles, if this type of treatment is administered. Please take any full sharp bins to your GP surgery.