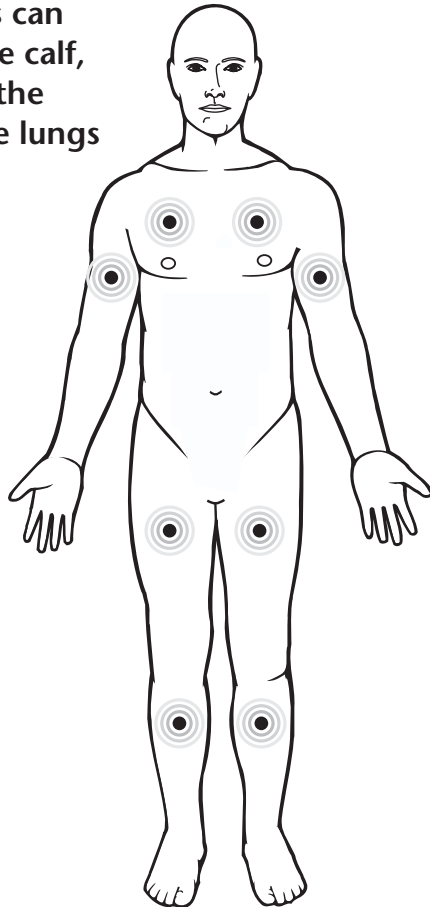


Am I still at risk when I leave the hospital?

It is possible that you could still be at risk of developing a clot when you leave hospital, therefore you should continue to follow the advice your health care team give you.

When at home, if you experience any of the symptoms listed in this leaflet, please contact your GP immediately.

Blood clots can occur in the calf, the thigh, the arms or the lungs



Further information

If you have any questions while in hospital, please ask a member of your health care team.

If you need any advice after you go home, please contact your GP Practice or NHS 24 (telephone number 111).

References

The information contained within this leaflet is based on guidance published in the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) guideline number 122, 'Prophylaxis of Venous Thromboembolism' available at:

www.sign.ac.uk

Reducing your risk of blood clots

Advice for adults coming into hospital



What are blood clots?

A blood clot or 'deep vein thrombosis' (DVT) usually forms in the deep veins within the legs, but it can happen elsewhere in the body too.

If the clot moves, or a piece breaks off and travels to the lung, it is called a 'pulmonary embolism' (PE).

A PE is a serious condition that may result in serious illness, long term disability or even death.

Am I at risk of developing a blood clot?

Anyone can be at risk of developing a blood clot. However, some people are at higher risk than others. For example, if you are overweight, pregnant, taking a combined oral contraceptive, having an operation, are elderly or have cancer; you may be at greater risk.

However, it can also happen for no reason at all.

What can I do to reduce my risk of developing a clot?

- Ask any member of your healthcare team if you are at risk of developing a blood clot.
- Follow instructions about medication that may be prescribed for you to reduce your risk of developing a clot. This may be a tablet or injection.

- Please note you may need to self administer your medication once home from hospital.
- There may be reasons why you cannot be prescribed medications to reduce your risk of developing a clot, your healthcare team will discuss this with you.
- If you have been prescribed anti-embolic stockings (elastic stockings AES) – please wear them as instructed. If these fall down or are too tight, tell a member of your health care team.
- If able, keep active; get up and about (when your health care team tell you that it is safe to do so). Try and avoid where possible sitting or lying with your legs crossed.
- If your health care team advise you that you are at risk, please do any exercises they advise.
- Drink plenty of water, unless your health care team tell you otherwise.
- Stop smoking. If you need help to stop smoking contact your local Practice Nurse or ask to be referred to the Smoking Cessation Service.

If you have any concerns regarding any of the above then please discuss with your healthcare team.

How will I know if I develop a clot?

The following symptoms may indicate the presence of a clot:

- Tight, throbbing pain in the leg (usually the calf)
- Swelling of a leg or arm (either new, or swelling that is getting worse)
- Any redness or heat in the calf or leg or arm
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Coughing up blood or blood in your spit

Tell your health care team immediately if you experience any of the above.

