

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

- Follow instructions you have been given for medication that has been prescribed to you.
- If you have been given compression stockings (white elastic stockings called TEDS) please wear them as instructed. If these fall down or are too tight, inform a member of your healthcare team immediately.
- Drink lots of fluids, unless your healthcare team ask you not to.
- Stop smoking – All NHS buildings and grounds have a No Smoking policy. Please ask to be referred to the Smoking Cessation Service or your local practice nurse.
- Eat a healthy balanced diet.
- Do any exercises recommended to you by your healthcare team.
- Maintain a healthy weight or lose weight if you are obese.

Further information and help

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

If you have any questions, require advice or help once you go home, please contact your GP or Practice Nurse.

Please contact NHS 24 on 08454 24 24 24 if you are unsure at any time.



Reducing your *risk* of blood clots

Venous Thromboembolism (VTE)

NHSScotland is working to reduce hospital associated VTE by reliable delivery of Risk Assessment and appropriate therapy to patients.



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We cannot accept responsibility for individual cases.

This leaflet explains:

- What is a VTE
- Who might be more likely to get a VTE
- How you can lower your chances of getting a VTE, and
- How you can tell if you might have a VTE.

For more information, please visit our website:
www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/sepsisvte.aspx

Many people know that air travel, particularly long flights, can result in blood clots developing in their legs or their lungs. This is due to a combination of dehydration, reduced mobility and the sitting posture on a plane. But did you realise that when you are admitted to hospital you are also at increased risk of blood clots? And you are usually in hospital for a lot longer than it takes to fly across the world.

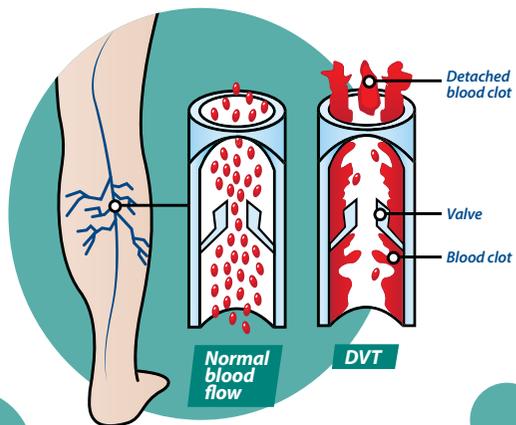
What are blood clots?

A blood clot, or deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a clot which forms in a deep vein, usually the leg. Deep veins are the larger veins that run through the muscles and transport blood to the heart. When a clot forms, it blocks this flow.

If the clot moves or a piece breaks off and travels to the lung, it is called a pulmonary embolism (PE). This is a serious condition which can result in serious illness, long-term disability or even death.

Blood clots can happen anywhere in the body but usually in the calf, thigh, arms or lungs.

Venous thromboembolism (VTE) refers to both DVTs and PEs.



Am I at risk of developing a blood clot?

Everyone can be at risk of developing a blood clot. Some people are at higher risk at certain times of their lives, such as when pregnant or when admitted to hospital because of illness or needing surgery. Sometimes it can happen for no reason at all.

What you can do to prevent blood clots

Lack of fluids and not moving about are a couple of the factors involved, but many illnesses or operations can also contribute.

So what can you do about it? Plenty, your five-point plan to stop the clots is the same plan that the staff looking after you are working to:

1. *Keep moving.*
2. *Drink plenty of fluids.*
3. *Ensure that you have spoken to someone and asked for a risk assessment for medicines and other measures to prevent clots.*
4. *If your assessment says you need medicines or other measures these should be explained to you and provided.*
5. *If necessary you might need to keep prevention measures going once you leave hospital: ask your healthcare team for more information on this.*

On admission to hospital

Your healthcare team should discuss with you how to reduce the risk of developing a blood clot and carry out a 'risk assessment' with you.

Please ask a member of your healthcare team to check if you have had a blood clot risk assessment carried out.

Am I still at risk when I leave hospital?

You are still at risk of developing a clot when you leave hospital, therefore you should continue to follow the advice given to you by your healthcare team.

If you experience any of the symptoms listed previously – please contact your GP, healthcare professional or NHS 24 immediately.

Once you go home, it is important that you:

- *follow any advice given to you on the ward (for example continue to wear compression stockings)*
- *continue treatment as prescribed by your healthcare team, and*
- *continue to move about as much as possible.*

How will I know if I develop a blood clot?

The following symptoms may indicate a clot:

- *tight, throbbing pain in the leg (usually in the calf)*
- *swelling of the legs or arms (either new or swelling that is getting worse)*
- *any redness or heat in the calf, leg or arm*
- *shortness of breath*
- *coughing up blood/blood in your spit*
- *chest pain and/or back pains that are unusual for you*
- *fast heart rate, racing pulse or palpitations*
- *any episode of collapse*

Tell your healthcare team if you experience any of the above symptoms.