Many people know that air travel, particularly long flights, can result in people developing blood clots 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 this can also potentially happen when you are in hospital.

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.

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.**

Ask your doctor or nurse for information on how you can reduce your risk of developing blood clots.

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

Venous Thromboembolism (VTE)

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