



Why you need to know about clots

If a blood clot forms in your leg, it can affect blood flow, and cause severe pain and swelling. It can also cause permanent damage to your leg.

If a blood clot forms, some of it may travel through your veins to your lungs and block their blood supply. Without blood, your lungs cannot send oxygen to the rest of your body. You may have trouble breathing or, in rare cases, you may die.

Studies have shown that treatment will reduce the chance of you developing a blood clot.

The following list shows the main things that put you at risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE) while you are in hospital:

- > major trauma (physical injury)
- > critical care
- > hip or knee replacement
- > prolonged surgery
- > stroke
- > heart failure
- > cancer
- > severe lung disease
- > severe infection or inflammation
- > having DVT in the past.

STOP THE CLOT

More information

For more information on preventing blood clots visit:

www.nhmrc.gov.au/nics

and follow the links to 'Programs' and 'Venous Thromboembolism Prevention'.

Translations of this information are also available in Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, French, Greek, Italian, Macedonian, Polish, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese. Ask your nurse or visit the website above.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CLINICAL STUDIES

This brochure was developed by the National Institute of Clinical Studies (NICS) as part of a national program to improve the prevention of blood clots in hospitalised patients. NICS is an institute of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Australia's peak body for supporting health and medical research.

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STOP THE CLOT



Reducing the risk of blood clots in your legs or lungs

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS AND PULMONARY EMBOLISM

You have been given this brochure because you may be at risk of forming a blood clot in your legs or lungs. If you get a blood clot, you could suffer permanent injury or, in rare cases, death.

To reduce this risk, you must:

ASK and ACT

This sheet tells you what to ask and how to act.





What your health care team will do

After you arrive at hospital, the risk of a blood clot forming in your legs or lungs will be assessed. Your level of risk will depend on:

- > your age
- > the reason you are in hospital
- > any other health problems you have or had in the past.

Ask your doctor or nurse about your level of risk of developing a blood clot.

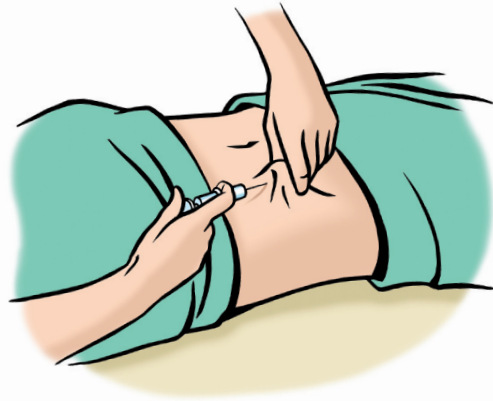
If you are at risk, your health care team will discuss treatment options with you. Treatment may include:

- > wearing compression stockings
- > using a compression pump on your lower legs
- > taking tablets or injections to help prevent a blood clot
- > gently exercising your feet and legs in bed
- > getting out of bed and walking as soon as possible.



Some of these treatments are not suitable for some people. If you are at high risk, your healthcare team may recommend more intensive treatment.

Ask your doctor or nurse what treatments they recommend for you.



What you must do

You must help your health care team reduce the risk of a blood clot forming.

While you are in hospital you must:

1. make sure you get any tablets or injections your doctor has prescribed to reduce your risk
2. keep your compression stockings on
3. avoid sitting or lying in bed for long periods
4. walk as often as your doctor advises.

Before you leave hospital, ask your doctor or nurse what to do when you go home. Find out:

- > how long to wear your compression stockings
- > whether you must use any medicines
- > what physical activity you need to do
- > whether you have to avoid alcohol
- > what else you and your family can do to reduce the risk of a blood clot.

What to watch for

If you experience any of the following while you are in hospital, call a nurse immediately:

- > pain or swelling in your legs
- > pain in your lungs or chest
- > difficulty breathing.

If you have any of these signs after you have left hospital, telephone your doctor immediately or go straight to the Emergency Department of any hospital.

