

# For your information

## Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) Prevention

### What is a DVT?

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot inside a vein. It usually happens in the veins of your thighs or calves.

### What are some of the risk factors for a DVT?

Major surgery that limits mobility	Cancer
Obesity	Heart and lung disease
40 years of age or older	History of DVT
Activity level less than normal	Pregnancy
Sitting still for too long	Blood clotting diseases
Birth control medication	Smoking
Hormone replacement medication	Traumatic injuries
Chronic breathing problems	

### What are some of the signs that I could have a DVT?

- Increased redness and warmth in a leg or arm
- Pain or tenderness in a leg or arm
- Increased swelling in a leg or arm not improved with elevation
- Possible to have no symptoms

### What are the risks of DVT?

Clots that form in the veins can break apart and travel to other parts of the body, including the lungs. A blood clot in the lungs is called a **pulmonary embolism (PE)**. These types of clots can be life threatening and must be treated right away.

## **Signs of a PE**

Difficulty breathing	Sharp chest pain
Rapid heart beat	Anxiety or nervousness
Fever	Cough that may produce bloody discharge
Fainting	

***If you have any of these, call your doctor or nurse right away or dial 911 if you are at home.***

## **How do I prevent DVT?**

### **DVT Precautions**

- Start walking as soon as possible after surgery/injury with your doctor's approval
- Do your post-operative exercises if ordered by your doctor
  - Ankle pumps** - Pump your ankles like you would on a car gas pedal
  - Gluteal sets** - Squeeze your thighs and buttocks and hold them tight for 3 seconds
- Wear compression stockings if recommended by your doctor
- Wear compression boots at all times unless you are walking, until discharge, if recommended by your doctor
- Drink plenty of fluids; avoid caffeine and alcohol
- Avoid tight socks, shoes, and clothing which could cut off blood flow to your legs
- Do not your cross legs or ankles
- Stop smoking
- Do not sit for long periods of time
- When you watch television, stand up and stretch and walk around the room during commercials
- When you are driving long distances, stop and get out of the car and walk around for 10-15 minutes every hour
- Your doctor may order medication to help prevent clotting; these come in pills, injections or IV infusions; your doctor will decide what is best for you and may order blood work if needed
- For more information on DVT prevention, complication, and treatment watch these patient education videos:
  - Lovenox
  - Coumadin
  - Smoking Cessation
  - Pulmonary Embolism
  - Anticoagulants

*Available in the "Get Well Network" or by calling 7620 on your telephone. Ask your nurse for assistance to play the videos.*