

Information for patients & carers

Preventing Blood Clots Following a Lower Leg Injury

Sometimes blood can pool and thicken inside normal, healthy veins and block the flow of blood through the body. This is known as a blood clot. Blood clots can be minor and have no signs and symptoms, but they can also cause significant health issues and, in some cases, lead to death.

Most blood clots occur in the deep veins of the legs or groin. Occasionally, clots break free from the area and move to other parts of the body, including the lungs. Blood clots that move to the lungs are particularly serious.

Blood clots are a leading cause of preventable death in Australia. Early detection and treatment of clots can help reduce the risk of harm. However, preventing clots is much easier, safer and more effective.

Lower leg injuries and blood clots

Your chance of getting a blood clot may be increased if you have a lower leg injury, particularly if you:

- Need immobilisation with a plaster cast
- Cannot (or are told not to) bear weight on the injured leg/s
- Have a severe injury such as a dislocation, fracture or complete tendon rupture

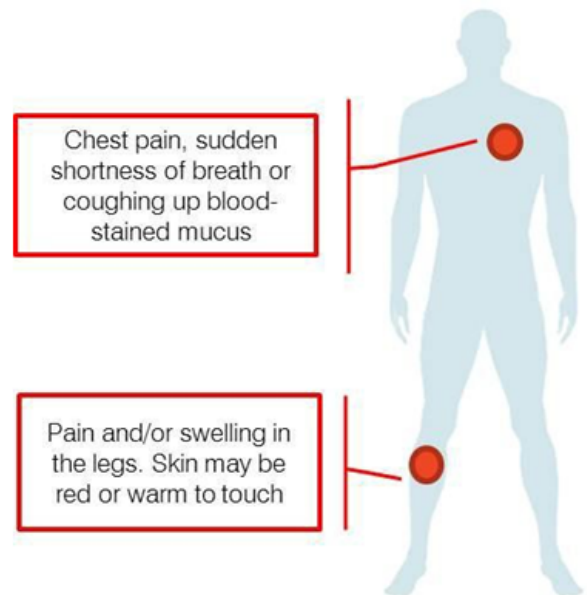
Your risk of developing a blood clot is increased if:

- You are over 60 years old
- You are overweight
- You have had a blood clot before
- Someone in your family has had a blood clot
- You are pregnant, or have recently given birth
- You have cancer, or are having cancer treatment
- You are on the contraceptive pill
- You take hormone-replacement therapy
- You have a chronic illness (like heart disease) or a blood disorder.

Speak to your doctor if you have any concerns.

Signs and symptoms of a possible blood clot

Seek immediate medical help if you experience any of the following:



Disclaimer

This fact sheet is for educational purposes only. It should not be used to guide and/or determine actual treatment choices or decisions. Any such decisions should be made in conjunction with advice from your treating doctor or other health professionals.

What you can do to help prevent a blood clot after going home



Drink water

Water helps blood flow. Check with your doctor how much water you should be drinking per day.



Stay active

Staying as active as you can will help to keep your blood flowing. Ask your doctor if it's ok to walk around.

What your doctor will do

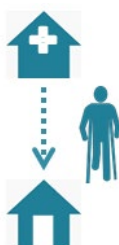
To help prevent you from developing a blood clot, your doctor may need to prescribe an anti-clotting medicine. If you think you are at risk, please discuss with your doctor.

Anti-clotting medicine

This is a medicine that slows down the formation of a clot, making it less likely to form. Your doctor will choose the best medicine suited to you. This will most likely be an injection that you have each day until you start moving around as usual.

What happens after you go home

After leaving hospital, you will need to follow up with your local doctor/GP or other community health professional. A plan for managing your treatment should be completed, which outlines who will help you manage your treatment and what exactly you will need to do.



Medical terms for blood clots

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) is the medical term for a blood clot in the deep vein of the arms, legs or groin.

Pulmonary Embolism (PE) is the term for a blood clot that has travelled to the lungs.

DVTs and PEs are collectively known as venous thromboembolism (VTE).

Acknowledgement: This information leaflet has been adapted from 'Blood Clots and You', developed by Southern Cross Hospitals, New Zealand.

Your "Going Home" Plan

<Place Patient Sticker Here>

Complete the following with your doctor or nurse to record what you have been given to help prevent a blood clot after leaving hospital:

Medicine: _____

Dose: _____

When To Take: _____

For How Long: _____

The anti-clotting injection will be given by:

- Myself/family member/carer Shown how to give
 GP
 Community nurse
 Other

When Should I Next See My GP: _____

Other: _____

If you start to develop swelling or pain in either leg, shortness of breath or chest pain, contact your GP immediately or go directly to an emergency department.

About the VTE Prevention Program

The VTE Prevention Program is run by the Clinical Excellence Commission. It aims to help prevent patients in hospital from developing blood clots (VTE).

The program raises awareness, improves clinical practice, and promotes the risk assessment of all patients and prescription of appropriate treatment to reduce the risk of developing a VTE.

For further information, please visit

<http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/keep-patients-safe/medication-safety/vte>

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