Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)  
Patient Education

Deep Vein Thrombosis is a blood clot in a vein deep in your body, such as the calf of your leg. You may be at risk for developing a blood clot because of your medical condition. Blood clots that are superficial or close to the surface are less dangerous than when they are in a deep blood vessel. The greatest danger is a clot that breaks off and travels to the lung(s). This clot in the lung is called a pulmonary embolism (PE). A PE can be life threatening.

Risk factors

- Bedrest for long periods of time leads to decrease in the flow of blood in your veins.
- Pressure from a tumor.
- Increase clotting can occur in some patients with certain types of cancers.
- Sitting for long periods of time.
- Problems from distended veins.
- Injury to a vein.
- Infection of the tissues around the blood vessels that has spread.
- Greatly increased activity in someone who has not been very active.
- Major surgery or operation.
- IV catheters (tube in your vein), especially in the large veins.
- Medications (Tamoxifen, estrogen, etc).

Watch for the danger signals of this condition. Call your doctor or nurse right away if you get:

- Red swollen tender area along the course of a vein which seems to get worse each day.
- Sudden onset of chest pain, shortness of breath, and anxiety. **These are serious symptoms that require medical attention right away.** This can be a sign that the clot has broken loose and traveled to your lungs. Call your doctor **immediately** if any of these symptoms develop.

Treatment

- Anticoagulant (blood thinners) medications may be given through your vein, as an injection, or as pills. This will prevent further blood clots from forming.
- Your pharmacist or nurse will review any foods or medications that you should avoid when taking these
blood thinners.
• For symptom relief, applying warm (not hot) compresses or heating pad will promote circulation and reduce pain.
• If you are having pain, discuss with your doctor what medications you should take. Make sure to let your doctor know of any over-the-counter medications you are taking. (such as Tylenol, aspirin, or Motrin)
• Elastic support stockings may be prescribed by your doctor to help increase the flow of blood from your legs.
• Bed rest may be prescribed for a time with legs elevated to reduce swelling.
• Avoid rubbing or massaging the affected area (the clot could break loose).
• Surgery is sometimes required to place a special filter in the main blood vessel to catch the clots and prevent them from going into your lungs.

Prevention

• Avoid sitting for prolonged periods of time.
• Avoid crossing your legs. Use caution to avoid injury to legs.
• If you smoke you should QUIT or reduce the amount that you smoke. The nicotine causes your blood vessels to become smaller and the blood flow is decreased.
• If you are overweight, the extra pounds cause extra pressure on the veins in your legs. You may need to see a dietitian who can assist you with foods that you should avoid when taking medications to treat your clot.