

YOU ARE AT RISK

BLOOD CLOTS

**Because you are hospitalised
and immobile, your risk of
developing a BLOOD CLOT
has increased.**

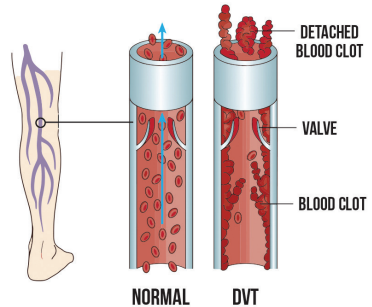


MID CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD
Te Pae Hauora o Rūhine o Tairāraua

**Patient information developed
by patients for patients.**

WHAT IS DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT) OR PULMONARY EMBOLISM (PE)?

- A DVT is a blood clot that can form in one of the veins in the body.
- They happen most often in the legs.
- They may partly or completely block the flow of blood in that vein.
- Some of the clot may travel through the vein to the lungs – this is called a pulmonary embolism (PE).
- A pulmonary embolism can block the blood supply to the lungs and can be fatal.



RISK FACTORS - HOW MANY CAN YOU TICK?

Admission to hospital to undertake treatment greatly increases **YOUR** risk of **BLOOD CLOTS**.

If you answer YES to one or more of the following, **YOU** are at **HIGHER RISK** of a blood clot.

- I am having a surgical operation or major procedure
- I am over 40 years old
- I smoke
- I am overweight
- I am taking hormone replacement therapy
- I am on steroids
- I am on the contraceptive pill
- Someone in my family has had a blood clot
- I have varicose veins
- I have a chronic illness/blood disease
- I have or have had cancer
- I have not undertaken much physical activity, eg walking before my operation or procedure

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.

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

Treatment may include:

- 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
- Using a compression pump on your lower legs, if recommended for you
- Wearing compression stockings, if recommended for you.



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

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO REDUCE YOUR RISK?



Drink the recommended amount of water

Water ensures the blood stays fluid for good blood flow. Reduced water intake can thicken the blood.



Keep active

Frequent small amounts of activity, eg getting up, walking around and leg exercises help to bring blood back from the lower legs reducing the risk of blood sitting and clotting in the veins.



Wear compression stockings (if they have been recommended)

Compression stockings help to reduce the diameter of the veins in the legs, improving blood flow.



Medication

Make sure you take any medication that has been ordered for you.

ENSURE YOU TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR AND NURSES BEFORE YOU GO HOME

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

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- Whether you must use any medicine, and how long for

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- What physical activity you need to do

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- What else you and your family can do to reduce the risk of a blood clot

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WHAT TO WATCH FOR

If you experience any of the following while you are in hospital, alert your nurse immediately:

- Pain or swelling in your legs
- Pain in your lungs or chest
- Difficulty breathing.

If you experience any of the above while at home, please call 111 for an ambulance immediately.

MidCentral DHB would like to thank Northland DHB for supplying the information in this brochure.