



# A guide to...

## Stopping Anticoagulation following Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) or Pulmonary Embolism (PE)

### *Patient Information*

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If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 198** or email [westherts.pals@nhs.net](mailto:westherts.pals@nhs.net)



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## **Risk of developing another blood clot**

Your risk of having another blood clot depends on the circumstances surrounding your first deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE). If your blood clot occurred as a result of surgery or trauma, and the risk factor was considered temporary, your risk of developing another DVT or PE may be very low. Following a DVT (generally a blood clot in the leg) or PE (a blood clot in the lung), there is a slightly higher chance of having another blood clot venous thromboembolism (VTE) than if you have never had a clot before. The symptoms of recurrent VTE may be the same as the symptoms you experienced the first time you had a blood clot. That means that you are more likely to understand what is happening and seek immediate medical attention.

<b>Common symptoms of a DVT are</b>	<b>Symptoms of a PE can include</b>
Pain or a feeling of tightness in the calf or leg	Shortness of breath, either of sudden or gradual onset
Swelling of the calf or leg	Chest pain which can be worse on breathing in
Warmth or discolouration of the calf or leg	Coughing up blood
	Sudden collapse

**If you develop any signs or symptoms of a PE please seek urgent medical attention.**

### **Risk factors include:**

- A previous DVT or PE
- Immobility
- Dehydration
- Excessive weight
- Age 60 and above
- Active cancer or cancer treatment
- Smoking
- Surgery
- Pregnancy, or having given birth, miscarried or had a termination in the past six weeks
- Hormone replacement therapy, or the contraceptive pill
- Acute medical illness

## **Important points to help reduce your risk of developing another blood clot**

- Avoid prolonged periods of immobility
- Keep well hydrated
- Keep to a healthy weight
- Avoid smoking

## **Travel: the following suggestions apply for any long journey, such as coach, train, car or plane**

- Exercise your calf muscles regularly, contracting them by moving the foot up and down every so often and, where possible, getting up and moving around.
- Avoid crossing your legs for more than a short period of time
- Sit where there is plenty of leg room
- Drink plenty of water and stay well hydrated
- Avoid alcohol as it will cause dehydration, and also sleepiness and therefore reduced mobility
- Avoid sleeping pills - they will cause you to be immobile for long periods
- Wear anti-embolic stockings; make sure that they are a good fit

## **Hospital admission**

If you are admitted to hospital for any reason your risk of developing a blood clot should be assessed by a doctor or nurse. It is important that you let them know that you have had a DVT or PE in the past so that adequate measures can be taken to prevent further blood clots. If you are assessed as being at risk, you will be given treatment (thromboprophylaxis) to reduce the risk of blood clots forming.

### **Points to remember while in hospital:**

- Make sure you get up and about as soon as you are able
- Make sure you drink plenty of fluids
- Ensure you take any clot preventing medications prescribed whilst in hospital and after discharge as directed

## **Further information is available at:**

[www.thrombosisuk.org](http://www.thrombosisuk.org)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)