



# Preventing another clot

A vein is a blood vessel that transports blood back to the heart. A deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot in a vein. A pulmonary embolus (PE) is a blood clot in the blood vessels of the lungs.

If you have had a DVT or PE before, discuss with your doctor about how to reduce your risk of having another blood clot in future. Depending on your specific situation, your doctor may advise:

- Using long-term medication to reduce your risk of a future blood clot or targeted strategies to reduce your risk of blood clots during higher-risk periods.
- Medications to reduce your risk of blood clots may be short-term or long-term:
  - Some patients may need to be on long-term medication to reduce their future risk of a blood clot. These medications are known as anticoagulants (commonly referred to as 'blood thinners'), and some examples are listed on the next page.
  - However, many patients may only need to be on short-term anticoagulants and may only need to take anticoagulants during periods of higher-risk, such as the examples below.
  - Your doctor will let you know if you should be on long-term or short-term anticoagulants.

Examples of higher-risk periods for blood clots are:

- **Surgery**  
Surgery is associated with an increased risk of blood clots, especially orthopaedic, abdominal/pelvic, and cancer-related surgeries.

- Physical injury or trauma, especially to the leg
- Reduced mobility  
For example, being admitted to hospital, or having prolonged bed rest
- Pregnancy and the few weeks after delivery
- Long distance travel (e.g. in an aeroplane or car)

Here are some examples of strategies that may be used to reduce your risk of having a blood clot during a high-risk period. Not all of these may apply to each situation.

- Let your doctor and other members of the healthcare team know that you have previously had a DVT or PE. If possible, seek medical attention well before the proposed higher-risk period (e.g. travel), in order to allow your healthcare team enough time to put in a place a plan that is tailored to your situation, and so they can seek specialist advice if required.
- Try to remain as mobile as your situation permits, as this will reduce the risk of a blood clot. If travelling, try to break up long distance travel as much as possible.
- You may be given an anticoagulant to reduce your risk of a blood clot. This may be in the form of an injection or a tablet.
- Compression stockings may be used in certain patients
- Stay well hydrated and avoid excessive alcohol
- Consider obtaining travel insurance
- Intermittent pneumatic calf compression is a mechanical device that may be applied to your legs to aid your circulation. This is mainly used in the hospital setting.



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