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.



Examples of commonly used anticoagulants in Australia and New Zealand

Medication name	Brand name(s)
Apixaban	Eliquis®
Dabigatran	Pradaxa®
Enoxaparin	Clexane®, Enoxaparin Winthrop®
Fondaparinux	Arixtra®
Rivaroxaban	Xarelto®
Warfarin	Coumadin®, Marevan®

Specific advice for me from my doctor (e.g. around pregnancy, hormone therapy, travel and surgery).

NB: This advice may change over time if your medical condition changes, or with changes in medical practice over time.

Date:	_

This leaflet was developed by THANZ for education and information purposes only and does not replace advice from a treating health professional.

Always see your health care provider for assessment and advice about your individual health before taking action or relying on published information.

