

DVT Prevention and Assessment Instructions

After any surgery or illness that limits your activity, the risk for DVT (Blood Clot in the leg) increases. The risk for DVT is increased in individuals with certain medical conditions such as Diabetes, but even healthy people can be at risk following surgical procedures. Fortunately, there are very easy ways to prevent DVT and also to recognize symptoms that might indicate a DVT.

DVT Prevention for Everyone

- Avoid crossing your legs while sitting or lying down.
- Avoid wearing tight or constrictive clothing that might interfere with circulation to your legs/feet.
- If you are allowed to walk, get up at least every 2 hours and walk around your home using assistive devices if recommended. This will help you improve circulation, prevent other complications and help you feel better sooner.
- If you have a history of blood clots or poor circulation, be sure to tell your Doctor or Nurse caring for you after your surgery.

DVT for Individuals with leg/foot surgery or other risk factors

- Do not bend your knee at a right angle or cross your legs while sitting or lying down.
- Unless otherwise directed, flex and extend your toes 5-10 times an hour while awake.
- Unless otherwise directed, flex and extend your foot 5-10 times an hour while awake.
- Unless otherwise directed, roll your ankle in a circle several times an hour while awake.
- If you are elevating your leg, avoid placing the pillow directly behind the knee where it might compress the blood vessels there. Instead, place the pillow just slightly below the knee.
- Avoid wearing tight or constrictive clothing that might interfere with circulation. If you have been instructed to wear compression hose, you might notice that they fit quite snugly. They are medically designed to enhance circulation to your lower extremities. If you are concerned that they may be too tight, consult with your doctor.
- If you are allowed to walk, get up at least every 2 hours and walk around your home using assistive devices if recommended. Not only does that improve circulation to your legs, but also helps to prevent other complications from surgery
- If you have been advised to take medication to prevent a DVT, take as directed and discontinue only on the advice of your physician.

Symptoms to Observe For and to Report to Your Doctor as Soon as Possible

- Pain, tenderness and swelling in the leg or calf
- Redness or warmth around the area that is tender
- A “cordlike” feel to the vein
- Discomfort when you pull your toes upward
- Blood Clots that form in very deep veins may or may not have any or all of these symptoms, but if you notice color changes, deep pain not associated with the site of your surgery or any other concerns, call your Doctor.
- **Seek emergency care if you experience** shortness of breath, rapid pulse, chest pain, fainting or feelings of severe anxiety, feelings of dread, etc. These symptoms could mean that a blood clot has moved into your lungs and that could be extremely dangerous. Immediate treatment is needed.