

## What Can be Done to Prevent DVT/PE?

Before your surgery your doctor will assess your risk.

Your doctor may give you blood thinning drugs, called anticoagulants, to help prevent blood clots. Depending on the type of surgery you have, you may be given a daily injection of heparin, you may need to continue to have this treatment for at least 4 weeks after your operation when you are at home. Your medical team will let your public health nurse and GP know. They will advise you how long to take your treatment for and who to contact if you develop any symptoms or if your treatment causes any problems

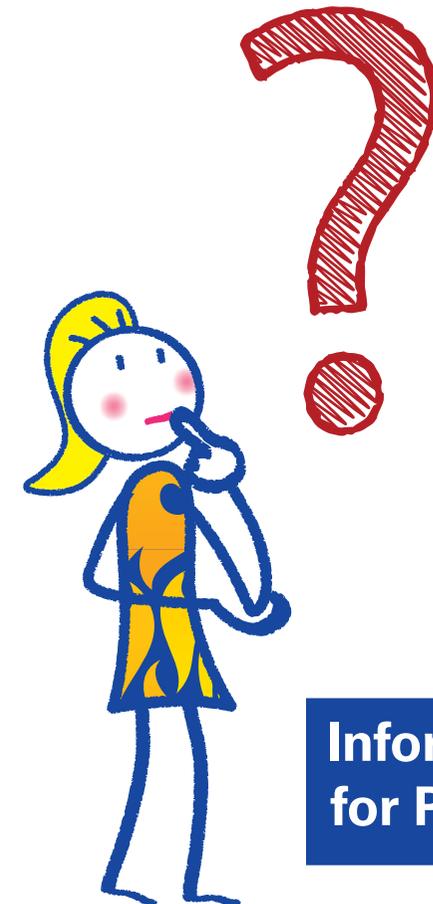
Your nurse may give you anti embolism stockings to wear until you are moving around as usual. These are tight stockings that squeeze your feet and legs, helping the blood to circulate more quickly. Your doctors may also offer you treatment with an intermittent pneumatic compression device. You wear this around your legs or feet. It inflates regularly to keep the blood circulating well.

You will also have plenty of fluids so that you don't become dehydrated after your operation. Your nurses and physiotherapists will get you out of bed and moving around as soon as possible.

## Other Tips for Preventing DVT

- Try and stay as mobile as possible
- If you can't move around much, do simple leg exercises every hour, such as bending and straightening your toes
- Drink plenty of water
- Report any symptoms to your doctor or nurse straight away

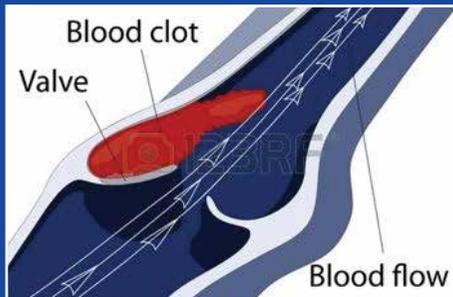
## Gynaecological Cancer and the Risk of Blood Clots



**Information  
for Patients**

## Introduction

People with cancer have a greater risk of blood clots, certain types of cancer carry a higher risk and gynaecological cancer is one of these groups. About 10% of patients with gynaecological cancers get clots during their cancer journey but you are at particular risk following surgery to remove your tumour. Clots are most likely to form in the thigh, lower leg or in the area between the hipbones (the pelvis). A blood clot can block the normal flow of blood through the veins. A blood clot can be very serious if it starts to move through your body because it can end up causing a blockage in your heart or lungs, although this is not common. Most clots can be successfully treated so it is important that you report any symptoms to your doctor or nurse immediately. A clot is often called a venous thromboembolism (VTE). There are two main types, deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and Pulmonary Embolism (PE)



## What is a DVT?

When a clot forms in a deep vein, usually in the leg, it is called a deep vein thrombosis or DVT.

## What is a PE?

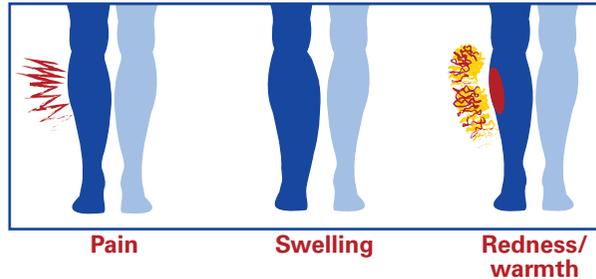
Pulmonary embolism (PE) is a blood clot in the lungs. PE occurs when a DVT breaks free from a vein wall, travels to the lungs and blocks some or all of the blood supply to the lungs. PE can often be fatal.

## Warning Signs and Symptoms

VTE can occur without any warning signs or symptoms. Symptoms may be associated with either DVT or PE.

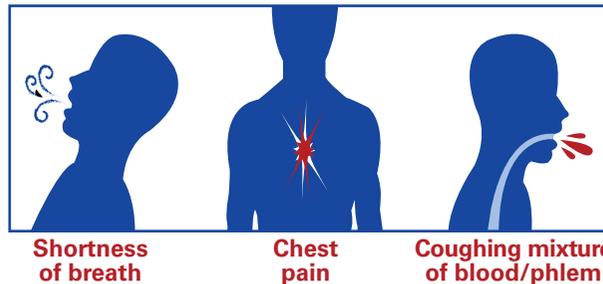
## Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)

- Pain or tenderness, in the leg
- Swelling of leg ankle or foot
- Redness or discolouration
- Warmth



## Pulmonary Embolism (PE)

- Unexplained shortness of breath
- Rapid breathing
- Chest pain
- Rapid heart rate
- Light headedness or passing out
- Coughing blood mixed with phlegm



**If you are experiencing any of these symptoms it is very important that you contact your doctor or nearest emergency department immediately.**

## Why Does Having Gynaecological Cancer Increase my Risk of a Clot?

### • Changes in your blood clotting system

Gynaecological cancer cells, particularly ovarian cancer cells, release chemicals which cause changes in your body's blood clotting system, these changes make the blood more likely to clot by itself.

### • Being less active

Sometimes your cancer or treatment can make you feel very ill and you feel too tired and weak to move around as much as usual. Staying still increases the risk of clotting because the normal movement of the leg muscles helps to pump the blood back up to the heart.

### • Surgery to remove your tumour

Surgery in the abdominal and pelvic area to remove your tumour causes damage the walls of blood vessels. You will also be less mobile in the days following surgery. This will increase your risk of developing a blood clot.

### • Chemotherapy

When chemotherapy kills cancer cells, the cells can release substances that cause an increase in blood clotting. Specific types of chemotherapy drugs are more likely to cause a blood clot than others. Your doctor will explain to you if the drugs you are having increase your risk of getting a blood clot.

## What About Other Risk Factors for DVT/PE

If you have a pre-existing blood clotting disorder or have a family history of DVT/PE you are more at risk. The risk is also greater in the over 60s, in smokers and in those who are overweight. Long journeys such as long haul flights can also increase your risk of DVT/PE.