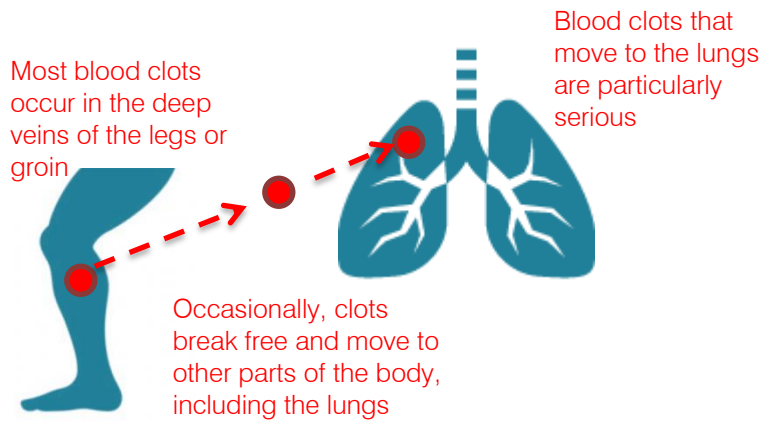


# PREVENTING BLOOD CLOTS IN PREGNANCY AND AFTER BIRTH

## INFORMATION FOR WOMEN & THEIR FAMILIES

A blood clot can sometimes occur if blood pools and thickens inside normal, healthy veins. They can then block blood flow through the body. Blood clots can be minor with no signs and symptoms, but some can cause significant health issues and, in some cases, lead to death.



Your chance of getting a blood clot may be increased if you are pregnant or after the birth of your baby.

### Contributing factors

Your risk of developing a blood clot is increased if:

- You are over 40 years of age
- You are overweight
- You have had a blood clot before
- Someone in your family has had a blood clot
- You have a chronic illness (like heart disease) or a blood disorder (like thrombophilia)
- You have severe varicose veins

### During Pregnancy

- You are admitted to hospital
- You are pregnant with more than one baby
- You become dehydrated or less mobile eg due to vomiting early in your pregnancy
- You are immobile for long periods of time eg after an operation or when travelling for > 4 hours
- You have pre-eclampsia



### After the Birth of Your Baby

- You had a very long labour (> 24 hours)
- You had a caesarean section
- You lost a lot of blood after you had your baby or received a blood transfusion



Speak to your doctor or midwife if you have any concerns.

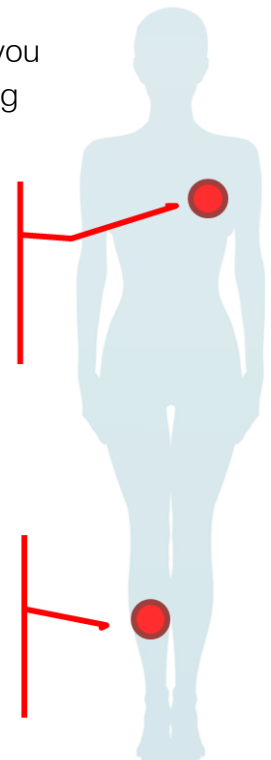


### Signs and symptoms of a possible blood clot

Tell your doctor or midwife if you experience any of the following symptoms:

Chest pain, sudden shortness of breath or coughing up blood-stained mucus

Pain and/or swelling in the legs. Skin may be red or warm to touch



## What you can do to help prevent a blood clot



### Drink water

Water helps blood flow. Check with your doctor or midwife how much water you should be drinking per day.



### Stay active

Staying as active as you can will help to keep your blood flowing. Ask your doctor or midwife if it's ok to walk around.



### Keep your stockings on

If you've been given compression stockings to wear, keep them on as directed.

## What your doctor will do

To help prevent you from developing a blood clot, your doctor may need to prescribe an anti-clotting medicine and/or a mechanical device. If you think you are at risk, please discuss with your doctor or midwife.

### Anti-clotting medicine

This is a medicine that slows down the formation of a clot, making it less likely to form. Your doctor will choose the best medicine suited to you. You will most likely be given an injection that you have each day for a specific period of time. If you have been in hospital during your pregnancy, or you've already had your baby, you may need to continue taking the medicine when you go home.

### Mechanical devices

Mechanical devices apply pressure to your legs to help keep the blood moving around. There are many different types of mechanical devices, with the most common being compression stockings.

If they become uncomfortable to wear, speak to your doctor or midwife before you remove or adjust them.

#### Disclaimer

This fact sheet is for educational purposes only. It should not be used to guide and/or determine actual treatment choices or decisions. Any such decisions should be made in conjunction with advice from your treating doctor or other health professionals.

## Your Blood Clot Prevention Plan

<Place Patient Sticker Here>

Complete the following with your doctor or midwife to record what you have been given to help prevent a blood clot:

Medicine:

Dose:

When to take:

For How Long:

Mechanical Device:

For How Long:

**If you start to develop swelling or pain in either leg, shortness of breath or chest pain, contact your GP immediately or go directly to an emergency department.**

### Medical terms for blood clots

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) is the medical term for a blood clot in the deep vein of the arms, legs or groin.

Pulmonary Embolism (PE) is the term for a blood clot that has travelled to the lungs.

DVTs and PEs are collectively known as venous thromboembolism (VTE).

### About the VTE Prevention Program

The VTE Prevention Program is run by the Clinical Excellence Commission. It aims to help prevent patients in hospital from developing blood clots (VTE).

The program raises awareness, improves clinical practice, and promotes the risk assessment of all patients and prescription of appropriate treatment to reduce the risk of developing a VTE.

For further information, please visit

<http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/programs/vte-prevention>

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