

Deaconess

Patient Education Sheet for DVT Prevention

WHAT IS A DVT?

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot that forms inside a deep vein. It can also lead to a serious health problem called pulmonary embolism (PE).

WHAT IS A PE?

A pulmonary embolus occurs when the blood clot travels through the veins and blocks a major blood vessel leading to the lungs. This is very dangerous and can cause death.

AM I AT RISK FOR GETTING A DVT?

Some patients are at higher risk for getting a DVT. Some risk factors include previous heart attack, previous DVT, increased age, cancer, heart disease, obesity, pregnancy, hormone therapy, birth control pills, inactivity, smoking, infection, injury, recent surgery or if having surgery expected to last longer than one hour.

HOW CAN DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS AND PULMONARY EMBOLUS BE PREVENTED?

Both DVT and PE often are preventable. Your physician may order TED hose SCD pump, or medication to help prevent a DVT.

- TED hose are special stockings that improve blood flow from the lower legs.
- SCD pumps use air through special sleeves to squeeze the lower leg muscles to also improve blood flow.
- Your doctors may order special medications that help to prevent or treat blood clots.

OTHER WAYS TO PREVENT DVT

- Early and frequent walking once your doctor approves
- While in bed make sure you're turning, coughing, and deep breathing
- Make sure you're taking in plenty of fluids once your doctor approves
- Simple leg exercises:
 - While lying on your back, tighten your thighs and push the back of your knee to the bed (Hold for 10 seconds). Relax and repeat 10 times. Repeat frequently.
 - With your legs straight and relaxed, point toes toward head of bed, then toward the foot of the bed. Repeat frequently.
 - Foot circles - with legs relaxed on bed, move ankles in small circles. Repeat frequently.

The TED hose should stay on until you are active again. This may mean that you need to wear your TED hose even when you go home. To prevent slips or falls, be sure to wear non-slip footwear over them when out of bed.

