**Blood Clots - Information for patients admitted to hospital**

There is an increased risk of blood clots in the veins of the leg (deep vein thrombosis or DVT) in patients who are less mobile after admission to hospital. Patients in this group include those with major injuries (e.g. fractures),major surgery, or major medical illness. About one in twenty of these patients get either a swollen leg due to a DVT, or shortness of breath or chest pain due to the clot travelling from the legs through the bloodstream to the lungs (a pulmonary embolism or PE).

About six in one thousand of such patients can die from a large blood clot in the lungs. Patients at highest risk include:

* older patients,
* those who are overweight,
* those with a history of blood clots in the legs or lungs, and
* those with cancer.

This hospital has a local guideline for reducing these risks:

* we encourage our patients to get up and walk as early as possible, and to perform regular leg exercises when confined to bed or chair
* we encourage our patients to drink plenty of fluids (some patients may require their fluids to be given in other ways)
* All patients are offered elastic stockings to wear on both legs, which increase blood flow in the legs and reduce the risk of clots. It is important that stockings are the correct size and checked every day for correct fit. Some patients find them tight or uncomfortable to wear
* Some patients are offered low-dose heparin, which thins the blood and reduces the risk of clots in the leg and lungs. Low-dose heparin increases the risk of bleeding including bleeding into surgical wounds, and may not be suitable for some patients
* while low-dose heparin increases the risk of bleeding, it is important to remember that it reduces the risk of death from a large blood clot in the lungs in high risk patients (from six patients per thousand to 2 patients per thousand)

If you have any questions about the risk of blood clots in the legs and lungs while in hospital, or about the preventative measures which we advise for you, please ask your doctor or nurse.

**Additional Sources of Information:**

Go online and view NHS Choices website for more information about a wide range of health topics <http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>

You may want to visit one of our Health Information Centres located in:

* Main Entrance at Birmingham Heartlands Hospital Tel: 0121 424 2280
* Treatment Centre at Good Hope Hospital Tel: 0121 424 9946

or contact us by email: [healthinfo.centre@heartofengland.nhs.uk](mailto:healthinfo.centre@heartofengland.nhs.uk).

**Our commitment to confidentiality**

We keep personal and clinical information about you to ensure you receive appropriate care and treatment. Everyone working in the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. We will always ask you for your consent if we need to use information that identifies you. We will share information with other parts of the NHS to support your healthcare needs, and we will inform your GP of your progress unless you ask us not to. You can help us by pointing out any information in your records which is wrong or needs updating.

**Dear Patient**

We welcome your views on what you liked and suggestions for how things could be improved at this hospital. If you would like to tell us and others about your experience please make your comments through one of the following sites:-

* NHS Choice:-           [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
* Patient Opinion:-      [www.patientopinion.org.uk](http://www.patientopinion.org.uk)
* I want great care:-    [www.iwantgreatcare.org](http://www.iwantgreatcare.org) (Here you can leave feedback about your doctor)

Be helpful and respectful: think about what people might want to know about this hospital or how your experiences might benefit others. Remember your words must be polite and respectful, and you cannot name individuals on the NHS Choice or Patient Opinion sites.

**If you have any questions you may want to ask about your condition or treatment, or anything you do not understand or wish to know more about, write them down and your doctor will be more than happy to try and answer them for you.**