

Deep vein thrombosis advice for fracture clinic patients

This leaflet offers more information about deep vein thrombosis (DVT). If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

What is deep vein thrombosis, and why does it matter to me?

You have a fracture or injury to your lower limbs, pelvis or spine. This may mean you are less able to move about, due to pain or because you must avoid weight bearing. You may have a plaster cast or splint.

This may increase the risk of you developing a blood clot in your leg – a deep vein thrombosis (DVT). Smoking and being overweight also increases your risk of clots.

All patients having a cast or splint fitted should have their risk of DVT assessed. You will be prescribed medicine to reduce the risk of a clot if your doctor thinks you need this.

What are the signs and symptoms of a DVT?

Your calf may become swollen, tense, red or warm and walking may become more difficult. You may have pain in your leg, especially your calf, which may get worse when you stretch it.

Rarely, the clot can move to the lungs causing shortness of breath and chest pain.

What happens if I do not get treatment?

You must get urgent advice if you have any of these symptoms – either contact NHS direct or go to your GP, your local ED (Emergency Department or A&E) or the fracture clinic.

A blood clot in the leg needs treatment with special medicine (anti-coagulants) if it is safe for you to have them. If you do not have this treatment, there is a risk of the clot travelling to your lungs causing serious health problems.

Is there anything I can do to help myself?

Follow the instructions from your surgeon and stay well hydrated (drink plenty of water).

If you are allowed to, move your foot and ankle regularly to help keep your blood flowing.

Do not sit still for long periods of time and do not sit with your legs down for more than an hour at a time – keep your toes moving and try and get up and about as much as you can or are allowed to.

This advice is similar to when you fly on an airplane.

Who can I contact for further information?

If you have any questions or concerns about a DVT, please discuss them with your surgeon or nurse practitioner at your clinic appointment, or contact the fracture clinic on 020 8672 1255 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

For more information, leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

