

Stopping Anticoagulants

This leaflet explains more about stopping anticoagulants such as warfarin, rivaroxaban, apixaban, dabigatran and edoxaban and how to reduce your risk of developing another clot. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist caring for you.

What do I need to do after stopping anticoagulant?

You have now completed the course of anticoagulation treatment for your blood clot. Precautions should be taken to reduce the risk of another clot in the following circumstances:

- If you are having an operation
- after a serious injury
- during pregnancy
- when taking oral contraception or hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- during long periods of inactivity
- if you become unable to walk
- before long journeys (by car, plane or train).

What precautions should I take if having an operation?

You are at risk of developing a blood clot during and after surgery. You must tell your surgeon that you have had a blood clot before so that the correct precautions can be taken. These may include wearing special compression stockings, getting out of bed as soon as possible after surgery and being given heparin injections (underneath the skin).

What precautions should I take following a serious injury (e.g., muscle injury, leg or pelvic fractures)?

The combination of injury and inactivity may increase the risk of developing a clot. Tell your doctor that you have had a clot before.

What precautions should I take during pregnancy?

During pregnancy your blood is more likely to clot than normal. You will need to inform your doctor that you have had a clot before. They may recommend heparin injections during your pregnancy or for a while after giving birth.

Can I take oral contraception/hormone replacement therapy (HRT)?

You will need to avoid any medicines containing oestrogen. You must tell your GP you have had a clot before and they will tell you about the most suitable alternatives available.

What precautions should I take during long periods of inactivity?

If you are ill and must stay in bed you should tell your GP that you have had a clot before. You may be at risk of developing another clot.

What precautions should I take during long journeys?

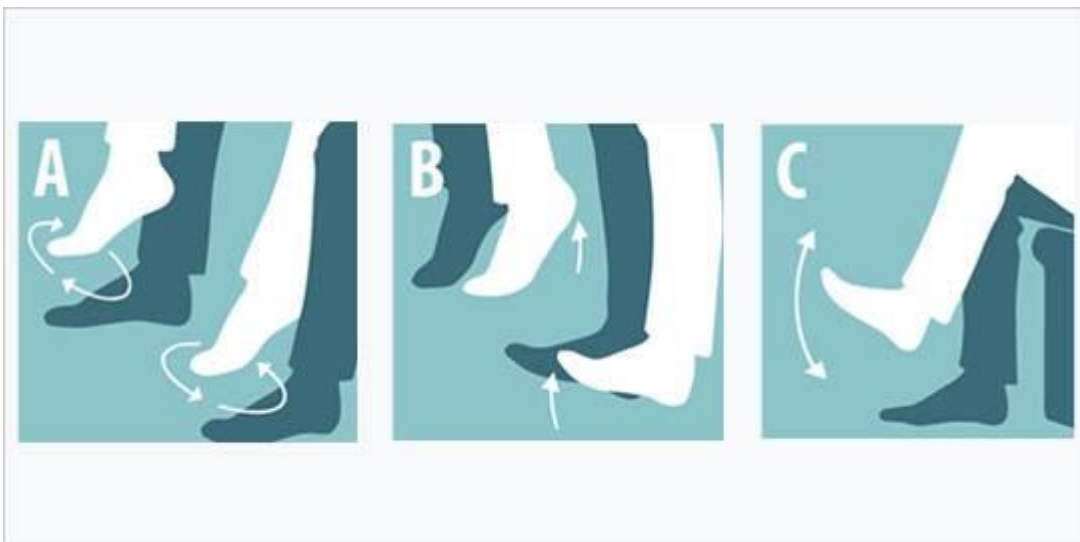
You are at increased risk of developing a blood clot if you go on a journey for longer than four hours (by car, plane or train).

During a journey, you sit for longer than normal and move around less which can cause sluggish blood flow. If you are flying, you can also become dehydrated so that your body has less fluid. This combination can increase the risk of a clot developing.

You can reduce this risk by:

- Drinking plenty of fluids, the day before and during your journey. Avoid alcohol and caffeine.

- Wear below knee compression stockings or flight socks during your journey. You can buy these from larger chemists with or without a prescription. You will need to be measured to make sure the stockings fit correctly.
- If you are travelling by plane or train, try to sit in an aisle seat so you can stretch your legs and walk around as much as possible.
- If you are travelling by car, take frequent breaks to stretch your legs and avoid sitting for longer than four hours at a time.
- Try to carry out the following exercises every half an hour whilst sitting, to encourage blood flow:



Circle your feet to the right and left several times.

Spread your toes, point your toes towards the floor, then flex your feet by lifting your toes upwards.

Important: If you experience a painful leg or breathing difficulties following a long journey see a local doctor urgently or go to the nearest Emergency Department (ED or A&E).

Useful sources of information

NHS Conditions, Anticoagulant medicines

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/anticoagulants/>

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about stopping anticoagulants and how to reduce your risk of developing another clot, please contact the anticoagulation clinic on 020 8725 5443 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm). Out of hours, please contact the switchboard on 020 8672 1255 and ask for the haematology specialist registrar on call.

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 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (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

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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