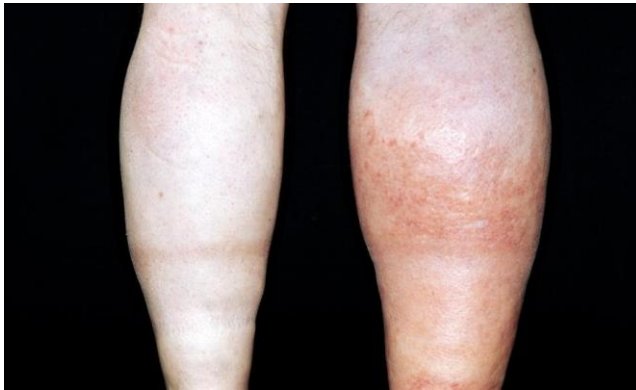


## Advice for patients following Venous thromboembolism (VTE)

### What is venous thromboembolism (VTE)?

Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) is a condition in which a blood clot forms, most often in the deep veins of the leg, groin or arm, known as Deep Vein Thrombosis, (DVT).

These clots may break free and travel in the blood, lodging in the lungs, known as Pulmonary Embolism, (PE). Together, DVT and PE are known as venous thromboembolism (VTE).



NHS (www.nhs.uk)

### Symptoms of DVT (deep vein thrombosis) in the leg are:

- Pain and tenderness in the leg (rarely both legs), usually in the calf or thigh.
- swelling in 1 leg (rarely both legs)
- warm skin around the painful area
- red or darkened skin around the painful area – this may be harder to see on brown or black skin

### Symptoms of PE (Pulmonary Embolism) are:

- Unexplained shortness of breath
- Chest Pain that is worse when you breathe
- Coughing up blood

### Other blood clots:

Sometimes a blood clot can happen in a vein in another part of your body, although this is very rare.

### Treatment

- **Blood-thinning medicines, called anticoagulants.**
  - You may have been given an injection of a blood-thinning medicine called heparin (Dalteparin) while awaiting test results.
  - [anticoagulant medicine](#) stops blood clots getting bigger and prevents new clots forming.

- You will need to take these for at least 3 months. **It is particularly important that you take these medicines correctly.**
- **HEPARIN e.g., Dalteparin before a confirmation scan.**
  - You may have an injection of a blood-thinning medicine called Heparin while you are waiting for a scan to see if you have a DVT (deep vein thrombosis), or a PE (Pulmonary Embolus).
- **Direct oral anticoagulant tablets (DOACs) for example, Apixaban and Rixaroxaban.**
  - DOACs are tablets which are taken by mouth. You will usually be provided with a 3-month supply of the DOAC from the SDEC (Same Day Emergency Care).
- **Warfarin**
  - Warfarin are tablets which are taken by mouth once a day. You will need to have regular blood tests while taking warfarin to make sure your dose is right.
  - Warfarin can take some time to take effect so you will need to have injections of Dalteparin (a rapid working anticoagulant) until the warfarin begins to take effect. You will usually be provided with at least 7 days of Dalteparin and 3 different strengths of warfarin from SDEC (Same Day Emergency Care).
  - You will be referred to the anticoagulation service who will contact you to arrange for you to have a blood test.
  - If you have any questions or concerns, or you have not been contacted by the anticoagulation service, please contact them on 01494 323 600 (Option 1).
- **Heparin Injections.**
  - In some cases, you may be prescribed Dalteparin injections only. You will usually be provided with at least one month's supply of these.
  - It is important that you do not run out of injections.
  - Contact your consultant to continue to provide these through the hospital pharmacy.
- **Surgery (Thrombectomy).**
  - This is to remove blood clots. Occasionally patients are referred for mechanical removal of blood clots.

**If you get a DVT when you're pregnant, you'll have injections for the rest of the pregnancy and until your baby is 6 weeks old.**

## **During your recovery**

### **To help your recovery from Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT):**

- Walk regularly
- Keep your affected leg raised when sitting

- If you still have swelling in your affected leg after 4 weeks, discuss compression stockings with your GP.
- Delay any flights or long journeys until at least 2 weeks after you start taking blood-thinning medicine.

### To help your recovery from Pulmonary Embolism (PE):

- Gradually increase your activity levels back to normal.
- If you smoke, do your best to give up:
  - View general advice about quitting: [www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/nhs-stop-smoking-services-help-you-quit/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/nhs-stop-smoking-services-help-you-quit/)
  - Get local support to help you stop:
    - Be healthy Bucks: <https://bhb.maximusuk.co.uk>
- You should make a full recovery from a pulmonary embolism if it's spotted and treated early. Most patients begin to feel much less breathless around 2 weeks after treatment and recover by 12 weeks.

## What happens next

The anticoagulation service will contact you within 7 days to check how you are managing the medication you have been given.

If you have any questions or concerns or you have not been contacted by the anticoagulation service, please call them on **01494 323 600** (option 1).

## Further information

- **Trust website:** You can find more information about treatment and support for your condition on the Anticoagulation page of the Trust website: [www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/anti-coagulation-monitoring/](http://www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/anti-coagulation-monitoring/)
- **NHS website:** Visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) to find out about symptoms, treatment and how to reduce your risk of developing venous thromboembolism.
  - [www.nhs.uk/conditions/deep-vein-thrombosis-dvt/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/deep-vein-thrombosis-dvt/)
  - [www.nhs.uk/conditions/pulmonary-embolism/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pulmonary-embolism/)
- **Thrombosis UK:** The charity has a wealth of useful resources [and information, including some fantastic videos](#) – visit [www.thrombosisuk.org](http://www.thrombosisuk.org)

Call 999 or go to A&E if you have symptoms of DVT (Deep Vein Thrombosis), such as pain and swelling and breathlessness or chest pain.

For general medical advice please use the NHS website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk), the NHS 111 phone line, or your GP.

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### **How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?**

Infection prevention and control is important to the wellbeing of our patients so we have procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections.

You, and anyone visiting you, must use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in and after you leave. You may need to wash your hands at the sink using soap and water. Hand sanitisers are not suitable for dealing with patients who have symptoms of diarrhoea.

### **More help or advice**

Contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on 01296 831120 or [bht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:bht.pals@nhs.net)

### **About our patient information**

We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please note that it's subject to change. You must always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.