

## **For B2 South patients with spinal cord injury or amputations**

### **Preventing Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) and Pulmonary Embolism (PE)**

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#### **What is a DVT or PE?**

A **DVT** is a blood clot in the veins in your leg or arm.

A **PE** is a blood clot in your lungs. This type of blood clot may form in your leg and then travels through the bloodstream to your lungs.

**After surgery or a period of bedrest, you have an increased risk of forming a blood clot.**

DVT or PE occurs in 100 to 180 patients for every 100,000 individuals every year.

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## **What are the signs and symptoms of a DVT or PE?**

### **Signs and symptoms of a DVT:**

- pain or tenderness deep in the back of your calf or inside your thigh
- swelling or warmth in your arm or leg
- redness on your arm or leg

### **Signs and symptoms of a PE:**

- shortness of breath
- chest pain
- passing out
- coughing up blood

## **How are DVT and PE treated?**

If you have a DVT or PE, blood thinner medication is used to stop clots from getting bigger and to prevent new clots from forming:

- You may be given Heparin or Low Molecular Weight Heparin. This medication can be given by injection or through an intravenous drip. You may have to stay in hospital if you need intravenous blood thinners or your doctor needs to monitor you closely.
  - You may take tablets called Warfarin (Coumadin) or Rivaroxaban (Xarelto).
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## How do I help prevent a DVT or PE?

### After surgery or a period of bedrest:

- do the exercises as instructed by your health care team
- get up and sit in a chair
- move as much as possible

### When taking a long trip

- Drink lots of water before and during your trip.
- Take a walk and stretch every hour, if possible.
- Move your lower legs and ankles often when sitting and avoid crossing your legs.

**Watch carefully for the signs and symptoms  
of DVT and PE.**

## When should I get help?

### Get help if you:

- have new, unexplained chest pain lasting more than 5 to 10 minutes
- have severe shortness of breath
- have a fast heart beat lasting more than 5 to 10 minutes
- have new or increased shortness of breath
- are coughing up blood
- have worsening of your symptoms
- have new leg or arm pain or swelling that you are concerned about

**Call 911. For less urgent cases, call your family doctor.**

## Location

Hamilton General Hospital

Thrombosis Clinic

McMaster Wing, 6th floor

Phone: 905-521-2100, Ext. 44479