

with. Gradually increase your exercise and walking until you are back to full mobility. We may give you stockings and Dalteparin to take home. This will only be temporary until you regain your normal mobility.

Where can you get more information?

The following healthcare professionals can give you further information and answer any questions:

- the doctors looking after you in hospital
- your GP
- the nurse looking after you
- your pharmacist or physiotherapist
- your district nurse

Other useful contacts:

Cancer information centre at The Christie **0161 446 8100**

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence www.nice.org.uk

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

We try to ensure that all our information given to patients is accurate, balanced and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact patient.information@christie.nhs.uk

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



Contact The Christie Hotline for
urgent support and specialist advice
The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Reducing the risk of a blood clot

How do you get a blood clot?

When you are inactive for any length of time blood tends to move around your body more slowly and collect in the lower parts of your body, often the lower leg, which can trigger a blood clot (thrombosis) to form and block your veins

Blood clots are more common in people who are less mobile, but may also occur in people who are unable to move around as much as normal, for example when travelling for long periods of time, while in hospital or having an operation. Patients who have cancer are also at an increased risk of developing such blood clots.

When a clot forms in one of the deep veins in your leg or arm it is called a deep venous thrombosis (DVT). If it comes loose it can be carried in your blood to another part of your body where it can cause more serious problems - this is called a venous thrombo-embolism (VTE).

It is important that you understand why you might be at risk, what can be done to reduce your risk and also how to recognise the signs of a blood clot.



Why are you at risk of a blood clot?

There are certain things that may make you more likely to develop a blood clot at the time of an illness, operation or admission to hospital.

Risk factors for developing blood clots are:

- you have cancer or have had recent chemotherapy
- you or a member of your family has had a blood clot before
- you are having an operation
- you are unable to move around
- you are over 60
- you are obese (you have a body mass index of 30 or more)
- you have long-standing problems with your heart and lungs
- you have had a recent heart attack or stroke
- you are on the combined contraceptive pill, you take hormone replacement therapy (HRT), you are currently pregnant or have recently given birth
- you are on other hormone treatments including tamoxifen and diethylstilbestrol

More than one of these risk factors may apply to you, so it is very important to follow our guidance.

What methods help to reduce the risk of a blood clot?

The risk factors you have will help us decide which methods should be used to reduce your risk of developing a blood clot.

Dalteparin (Fragmin®): Dalteparin is in a group of medicines called 'low molecular weight heparins' which are drugs used to prevent your blood from clotting. They are also known as anti-coagulants. Dalteparin can be used at low doses to prevent blood clots from forming and in higher doses to break up clots that have developed in the veins. It is given once daily and is injected under your skin, usually in your stomach area. It is very safe at such low doses, however, if you suspect a problem (eg bruising/bleeding) you should seek immediate advice.

Compression stockings: Compression stockings (also known as TEDs - thromboembolism deterrent stockings) are tight stockings designed to reduce the risk of blood clots. The stockings squeeze your feet and legs,

helping your blood to move around your body more quickly. It is important to wear the stockings correctly until you are back to your usual level of activity. Ask your healthcare professional for guidance on the correct way to wear and maintain your stockings.

Inflatable Compression Devices (ICDs): These go around your leg (and sometimes your feet) and inflate automatically at regular intervals. They apply pressure when inflated which keeps your blood moving around your body. These are mostly used for patients having surgery.

What can you do to reduce your risk of a blood clot?

During your stay in hospital, drink plenty of fluids so that you do not become dehydrated. It is important to move about while you are in hospital or as soon as possible after an operation. Ask staff for a copy of The Christie booklet about exercising during and after treatment for cancer. You can also watch a video on The Christie website. Exercises help to reduce the risk of a blood clot, and these simple exercises can be done on the bed and sitting in a chair.

If you have any questions or concerns you should speak to any healthcare professional on your ward.

What are the signs and symptoms of a blood clot?

You should contact your healthcare professional immediately if you experience any of the following during your time in hospital or in the days or weeks after discharge from hospital:

- you have pain or swelling in your leg
- the skin on your leg becomes hot or discoloured
- the veins near the surface of your legs appear larger than normal
- you become short of breath
- you feel pain in your chest which gets worse when you breathe deeply
- you cough up blood.

Once you get home:

It is very important to drink plenty of fluids and keep mobile around the house. Take short walks outside, however, do not walk too far to begin