

Patient information

Prevention of DVT and Thromboembolism in Patients having Dental Treatment under General Anaesthetic

Liverpool University Dental Hospital

What is a thromboembolism?

Thromboembolism can be described as the blocking of a blood vessel by a clot that has moved from its original site. Most clots (thrombi) occur in the deep veins of your legs; this is called Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT). Dislodged clots (thrombi) can travel to your lungs and this is called Pulmonary Embolism (PE).

The development of clots can cause long-term damage to your veins, may cause serious complications and in some cases may even be fatal. In most cases however, thromboembolism can usually be prevented.

On admission to hospital, you will be assessed for your risk of developing a clot. Following this assessment you may be offered preventative treatment.

Who is at risk of developing thromboembolism?

The development of blood clots is associated with inactivity and your risk is increased the longer your inactivity goes on. Certain medical conditions or surgical procedures also increase your risk. Your risk is also increased if you are obese.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- **Deep Vein Thrombosis**
Pain and tenderness in your calf muscles, and possible swelling in that area.
- **Pulmonary Embolism**
Sharp chest pain and difficulty in breathing. Possibly coughing up blood

What can be done by your clinical team to prevent clots forming?

You will be offered treatment according to your risk assessment.

- **Sequential compression system** – during your operation, cuffs are placed on each calf. These cuffs improve the blood flow to your legs. They will be removed before you leave the Dental Hospital.
- **Heparin injection** – a medicine is injected under your skin using a small needle. This is usually given at the start of your operation.

Are there any risks with the preventative treatments?

The heparin injection may cause bruising or bleeding in the 24 hours after the injection.

Is there anything else that I can do?

- Stay as mobile as your condition or pain control allows.
- If you are confined to bed you will be encouraged to do leg exercises.
- It is important you do not become dehydrated, so drink fluids regularly or as directed by the nursing staff.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Patient notes:

Further information

If you experience any problems at home, you can contact the Theatre Department on Tel: 0151 706 5012, your family doctor (GP), or out of hours, your local Emergency Department (A & E).

More information on reducing the risk of venous thromboembolism (deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism) in inpatients undergoing surgery is available on the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) website: www.nice.org.uk

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