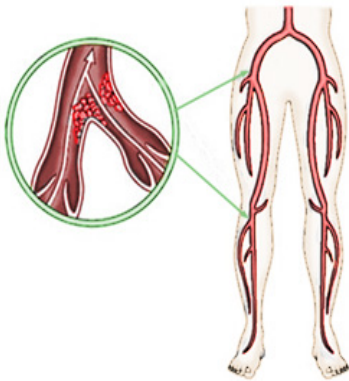


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Deep Venous Thrombosis (DVT) Prevention



As mentioned in our 'risks' sheet, DVT (also known as Blood Clots) are one of the more prominent concerns after total joint replacement. A blood clot forms in the deep veins of the lower leg. These will cause pain, but more importantly, can lead to pulmonary embolism (PE). This condition can be life threatening in its worst case. To prevent this from happening we take several measures which include the following:

- a) **Foot pumps** on both feet during your hospital stay. These help keep blood flowing up the legs back to the heart.
- b) **T.E.D. hose** stockings also known as compression stockings. These also help with blood flow by compression of the calf muscles.
- c) **Ankle pump exercise**. These are part of the exercise routine to help strengthen the leg but they also help prevent DVTs.
- d) **Warfarin (Coumadin)**. This is a blood thinning medication. This makes it more difficult for blood to clot. Lab values will be drawn daily to help ensure proper dosing. Some circumstance may warrant the use of **Lovenox**, an anti-platelet drug instead of Coumadin.

The use of these measures greatly reduces the chance of getting a DVT. As your activity level increases, some of these measures will be withdrawn.

Coumadin Routine

Patients on Coumadin will follow a strict schedule after surgery to help best prevent complications from the use of this medication. While in the hospital a lab value, called a PT/INR, will be drawn daily. This gives a guide as to how “thin” your blood is. We will adjust your dose of Coumadin up or down accordingly. Once you have left the hospital your blood will be drawn twice a week (every Monday and Thursday) for three weeks. This will be taken at a clinic or by home health nurses or even the rehab center that you are at if applicable. You may be on blood thinners longer if two joints are being replaced or if you’ve had prior problems with DVT/PE. After 21 days of Coumadin you will take a day off and then begin taking a baby aspirin (81 mg) daily for three months.