

Preventing blood clots in pregnancy

Information for patients

This information sheet explains the risk of blood clots during pregnancy and how to prevent them. If you have any queries, do not hesitate to speak to your midwife.

Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your **name and date of birth** and check your **ID band**. If you don't have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address.

If we don't ask these questions, then please ask us to check.
Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

Why should I be concerned about blood clots?

During pregnancy and up to six weeks after giving birth, you are at an increased risk of developing a blood clot.

What is a blood clot?

A blood clot, known as a deep vein thrombosis, is most common in the leg or pelvis. It may cause swelling, redness, warmth and pain and you need to go to your local Emergency Department immediately. This may lead to a pulmonary embolism.

A pulmonary embolism is a blood clot in the lungs and can cause shortness of breath, coughing, pain when breathing or even cause you to collapse and is life-threatening. If you have any of these symptoms, go to your local Emergency Department immediately.

Who is at risk?

When you book your pregnancy, we assess and record your risk of developing a blood clot. Your midwife will tell you if we have identified any risk factors. If we think you are at risk, we may advise you to have blood thinning injections and wear anti-embolism stockings.

What can I do to reduce my risk?

- Keep moving when you are active, it increases the blood flow and helps prevent clots. If you can, walk around at regular intervals. If not, bend and stretch your leg and ankles regularly, to increase your blood flow.
- Drink plenty. Water helps to prevent you becoming dehydrated and developing blood clots.
- Ask your midwife if you have any questions about your risk.

What happens when I go home?

Stay active as much as possible and drink plenty of water. If we advised you to have injections to thin the blood, we will teach you how to self-inject and give you a box to safely store used syringes. The community midwife will collect this box when you have finished your course of injections.

If we have advised you to wear anti-embolism stockings while your movement is limited, they will increase the blood flow and help prevent clots. Wash them every two-three days in a delicate cycle, or hand wash. Once you are moving normally, you don't need to wear them.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you.

The PALS office is in the main hospital foyer at PRUH and they would be happy to advise you. Contact details below:

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND:
Tel: 01689 863252

Email: kch-tr.palskent@nhs.net

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.

PL738.2 February 2016

Review date February 2019

Corporate Comms: 1294