

Anticoagulation and your periods

Information for menstruating women

This leaflet explains how taking anticoagulant medicine can affect bleeding during your periods and how the anticoagulation clinic team can help you.

What is an anticoagulant?

An anticoagulant works by slowing down how long it takes for your blood to clot and so helps to prevent and treat blood clots.

How will taking an anticoagulant affect my periods?

Some women taking this medication do not notice any difference in their periods.

But you may have periods that:

- are heavier, and /or
- last longer.

To a certain extent, this is to be expected, because of how anticoagulants work.

What is not normal?

When you are taking an anticoagulant, it is **not** normal to:

- have to change your period protection (sanitary towels, tampons, moon-cup) every two hours or more often to keep up with the bleeding
- have 'flooding' or blood leaking through to your clothes or bedding
- be unable to go out or see your family or friends or go to work because of the amount of bleeding
- have continuous bleeding that lasts a lot longer than your usual period.

When you did not normally experience any of the above before you started taking the anticoagulant medicine.

How can I make this less likely to happen?

Before you start taking anticoagulants, please let the team looking after you know if you:

- are taking hormonal therapy to regulate your periods
- have fibroids or adenomyosis
- already have heavy periods.

If you have heavy periods, also tell them if you usually:

- pass large clots during your period (thicker than 2cm/1inch). It is normal to see clots in menstrual blood but if yours are large, this can be a sign that you are losing more blood
- need to change your period protection during the night
- have leaking through pads/tampons
- have to wear tampons and pads at the same time.

If you are taking the contraceptive pill, do not stop taking this without discussing it with us at the anticoagulation clinic.

Can I do anything if I do have heavy periods?

Yes. There are number of ways to help manage them. Sometimes you might need extra iron and we can do a blood test to check your iron levels.

Other things we can do to help manage heavy bleeding during your periods include:

- prescribing you a different anticoagulant
- prescribing you an extra tablet to take during your period to help reduce blood loss
- prescribing you hormonal therapy to help regulate your periods
- fitting you with an intra-uterine device (coil).

If you do have heavy periods or are worried about having them, contact us at the anticoagulation clinic and we will discuss with you your best options.

Who can I contact with queries or concerns?

If you are being treated at our Denmark Hill site:

Tel **020 3299 5553** Email **kch-tr.dh-anticoag@nhs.net**

If you are being treated at our Princess Royal University Hospital site:

Tel **016 8986 4263** Email **kch-tr.br-anticoag@nhs.net**

Out of hours, contact 111 by phone or online.

How can I find out more about DVT and PE?

Please ask your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or the anticoagulation clinic team for more information. You can also find useful information on the Thrombosis UK website:

www.thrombosisuk.org

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.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS:

Tel: **020 3299 3601** Email: **kch-tr.pals@nhs.net**

You can also contact us by using our online form at **www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals**

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.