

# Preventing DVT After Hospital Discharge

During your hospital stay, you and your healthcare team have worked together to make your recovery go as smoothly as possible – free of complications, including Deep Vein Thrombosis, or DVT.

Now, as you begin your recovery at home, it is important you continue to do all you can to prevent DVT.

The most important thing you can do is stay active. Do leg and ankle exercises while you are resting in bed or sitting in a chair. These lower body exercises are small movements that can get your blood circulating.

Walk short distances several times a day to help your blood keep moving.

If you are still unsteady, have a friend, family member or caregiver walk with you until you are strong enough to go on your own.

Always wear shoes or socks with treads so your feet can grip the floor giving you added support. This can help you avoid slips and falls, even in your own home.

Be sure to listen to your body and your healthcare provider. You are healing and still need to regain your full strength. Certain activities may be restricted until after your follow-up appointment.

If you are unsure of an activity, do not start any new activities without talking to your healthcare provider first.

If you tire out while walking or doing any exercise, rest. But remember, staying active is key to reducing your risk of DVT.

As you continue to recover your healthcare provider may recommend you wear compression stockings. When worn correctly, compression stockings can increase blood circulation in your legs and feet.

Unlike the socks or stockings you normally wear, compression stockings use a stronger elastic to create pressure in your legs, ankles and feet.

They are usually tighter at the ankles and less tight toward the knees and thighs to prevent the blood from collecting deep inside your vessels.

If you do wear compression stockings regularly, check your skin and feet daily for signs of reduced blood flow. If you notice that your skin is pale, cool, broken or purple, you may need to try a different size compression stocking.

To further reduce your risk, your healthcare provider may prescribe blood thinners, also called anticoagulant medications. These medications can prevent your blood from clotting too much.

You may have taken these medications while in the hospital and need to continue to take them at home. Some you may need to take by injection into your abdomen area.

If you need to stay on blood thinners for a longer period of time, your healthcare provider may prescribe a pill.

These pills often require careful monitoring of your blood levels, so discuss how to take these medications safely with your healthcare provider.

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If you are prescribed anticoagulant shots or pills, taking these medications may make you bruise more easily or make a cut bleed more than usual.

Let your healthcare provider know if you have a fever or experience any unusual bruising or bleeding – such as bleeding gums when brushing your teeth, or dark black or tarry stool. Your medication may need to be adjusted.

Continue to take all of your medications as directed – including the ones you took before you were in the hospital - but talk to your healthcare provider about how all of your medications may interact to ensure your safety.

Deep Vein Thrombosis is a serious complication that can slow your recovery and cause a return trip to the hospital. To avoid DVT, talk to your healthcare provider about some prevention strategies you can follow as you continue your recovery at home.