

## Patient information

# Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)

Haematology Liverpool

Please read this leaflet carefully. It will provide you with the information about the blood clot that you have been diagnosed with.

### What is a Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)

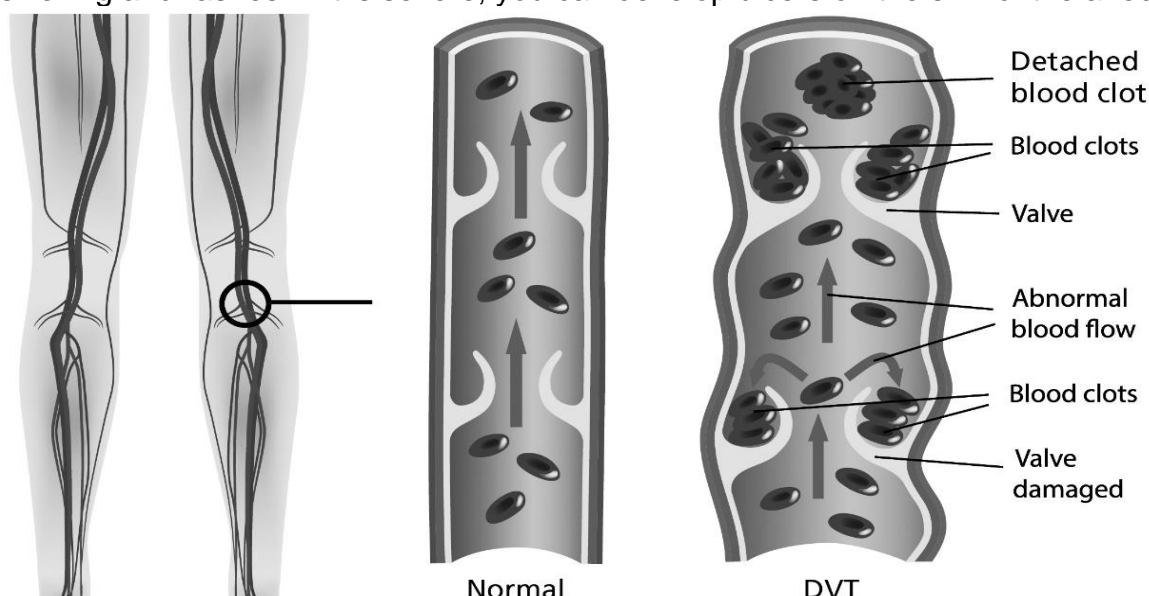
Deep-vein thrombosis is a blood clot in the veins, usually in the leg or pelvis, although it can happen elsewhere in the body. These veins go through the muscle and cannot be seen under the skin.

When a DVT develops, the blood flow through the vein is either partially or completely blocked by a blood clot. This can cause your affected limb to become painful, red and swollen.

### Are there any complications?

If a piece of the blood clot breaks off from the DVT, it has the potential to travel through your bloodstream to your lungs. If it is large enough it could block one of the blood vessels. This blockage is called a pulmonary embolism (PE). A PE can cause you to cough up blood-stained spit, have chest pain and feel short of breath.

If you have had a DVT, you can develop a long-term condition called post thrombotic syndrome. Symptoms can range from mild to severe and include: calf pain, discomfort, swelling and rashes. If it is severe, you can develop ulcers on the skin of the affected limb.



## **Why did I get a DVT?**

It is not always possible to identify a reason but there are several things that can increase the chance of having a DVT or PE.

### **These include**

- Previous blood clots or a family history of blood clots.
- Pregnancy.
- Oral contraceptive pill.
- Surgery or immobility.
- Long haul flights (and other travel more than four hours in duration).
- Smoking.
- Being overweight.
- Cancer.
- Clotting disorder such as thrombophilia.
- Trauma.

## **What is the treatment for DVT?**

You will require an anticoagulant (often referred to as blood-thinning medication). These make your blood take longer to clot and you take them to stop your body from forming more blood clots. Anticoagulants will not break down any blood clots. Your body does this naturally.

There are a number of different medicines that may be used to help prevent a further blood clot from forming. Your doctor will decide which the best one for you is.

- Warfarin is a daily tablet. It can interact with other medicines and some foods, so always read the information on the packaging carefully. If you're on warfarin you will need to have regular blood tests and dose adjustment to make sure you're taking the correct amount.
- The group of medicines called DOACs (eg. Rivaroxaban, Apixaban, Dabigatran and Edoxaban) do not require you to have frequent blood tests but you must remember to take them every day.
- Low molecular weight heparin is an injection into the skin of the abdomen or leg and may be advised if you have other medical conditions.

### **When taking anticoagulants it is important to:**

- Take medication regularly at the same time each day.
- Keep all clinic appointments.
- Keep your anticoagulant alert card with you at all times.
- Let your doctor know if you become pregnant or are planning on becoming pregnant.

**Anticoagulants can increase the risk of bleeding which may require medical review.**

**If you experience any of the following symptoms please seek prompt medical advice. You can either call 111 for advice or if your symptoms are severe, please attend your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).**

- Unexpected or uncontrollable bleeding.
- Coughing or vomiting blood.
- Black stools or blood in your stool.
- A severe headache that will not go away, dizziness or weakness.
- A fall or injury to your head.
- Blood in your urine.
- Severe unexplained bruising.

### **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.

### **Further Information**

#### **Contact Details:**

**Haematology Liverpool**

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