



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

What you need to know about Preventing Blood Clots (Venous Thromboembolism) While Receiving Chemotherapy for Cancer

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Cancer Services

- ① For more information, please telephone the hospital where you are receiving treatment:

The York Hospital

Monday to Friday 08.30 - 17.00: 01904 726516

Out of hours (ward 31): 01904 726031

Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Scarborough Hospital

Tel: 01723 342447

Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, YO12 6QL

Why have I been given this information?

As you may be aware, living with cancer and receiving chemotherapy is associated with an increased risk of developing a blood clot. This is also known as a venous thromboembolism. The following information tells you about the types of blood clot that may be developed and any signs and symptoms to look out for.

What is Venous Thromboembolism (VTE)?

There are two types of VTE:

1. Deep Vein Thrombosis, or DVT, is a blood clot that forms in the deep veins that run through your body. The most common place for a blood clot to form is in the veins in one of your legs, but they can also form in the arm.
2. Pulmonary Embolism, or PE, occurs when part or all of a blood clot becomes dislodged, passes through your circulation and reaches your lungs.

Signs and symptoms of VTE

DVT- most common symptoms include pain, swelling, redness and warmth to the area.

PE- breathlessness, chest pain, fast heart rate, racing pulse or palpitations, coughing and sometimes blood-stained phlegm.

If you develop any of these symptoms please seek medical advice immediately.

Who is at risk of VTE?

Having active cancer can increase your risk of developing a VTE.

The types of cancer most likely to increase this are: germ cell, stomach, pancreas, lung, lymphoma, gynaecological, brain and kidney.

Certain cancer treatments may also increase this risk such as Cisplatin, tamoxifen, anastrozole, thalidomide, pomalidomide, lenalidomide, bevacizumab and sunitinib.

There are other additional risk factors for developing a VTE which you should be aware of:

- You are over 60 years old
- You are pregnant or have recently had a baby
- You or a close relative have had a blood clot before
- You have another medical condition requiring regular treatment
- You are overweight
- You smoke
- You have become dehydrated
- You have a central line in situ (PICC, Hickman, port-a-cath)
- You are taking a contraceptive pill or hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- You are having an operation, especially on your stomach, hip or knee.

What can I do to reduce my risk of VTE?

- Keep a healthy weight and eat a healthy balanced diet.
- Keep moving or walking; leg exercises are valuable.
- Drink plenty of fluid to keep hydrated.
- Stop smoking.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse if you take a contraceptive pill or hormone replacement tablets. Your doctor may ask you to stop taking them while having chemotherapy.
- If you have to make long journeys that are longer than three hours try to walk around or do leg exercises during the journey.

You should always tell your doctor before you start your chemotherapy treatment if you or a close relative have had a previous blood clot.

If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your doctor for advice.

How can my medical team help me reduce my risk of developing a VTE?

Your doctor may talk with you about starting on some medications to help reduce your risk of developing a VTE. There are different options available, but not all are suitable for everyone. Some of the possible options include:

- Daily injections, such as Dalteparin or enoxaparin.
- A type of tablet medication often referred to as a DOAC (direct acting oral anticoagulation). Examples may include apixaban, rivaroxaban, edoxaban or dabigatran.

To help select the best medication for you, please make your doctor or pharmacist aware of any other medication you may be taking.

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Anisah Ahmad, Pharmacist, York Hospital Pharmacy Department, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or telephone 01904 725736.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:
www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

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