



ST LUKE'S CARE

— PRIVATE HOSPITAL —

REDUCING THE RISK OF BLOOD CLOTS

Blood clots are lifesaving when they prevent bleeding, but they can also form and cause a heart attack, stroke or other serious medical problems. The risk of developing a blood clot in your legs or lungs increases significantly with medication, surgery or long periods of inactivity or bed rest.

Symptoms of blood clots depend on their location in the body. Some blood clots produce no symptoms until they rupture or become dislodged and travel through the circulatory system to other sites. Specific body locations and their symptoms include the:

- ✿ **Legs (deep vein thrombosis)** with symptoms including pain, redness, and swelling
- ✿ **Legs or arms (arterial blood clot)** with symptoms including pain, pale colour, numbness, loss of feeling and coolness to the touch.
- ✿ **Lung (pulmonary embolus)** with symptoms including chest pain, shortness of breath, fainting, and rapid pulse and breathing.
- ✿ **Brain artery (stroke)** with symptoms including possible loss of speech, vision, profound dizziness and weakness on one side of the body.
- ✿ **Coronary artery (heart attack)** with symptoms including chest pain, shortness of breath, nausea, indigestion and sweating. Women, people with diabetes and the elderly may experience other non-specific symptoms.
- ✿ **The artery that supplies the intestine (mesenteric ischemia)** with symptoms including abdominal pain, nausea, bloating and blood in the stool.

What we do to minimise your risks of developing blood clots

Depending on your condition and treatment, your healthcare team will implement strategies to minimise your risk of developing blood clots while in hospital and will provide you with blood clot prevention strategies to keep you safe on your return home.

How you can help to reduce your risk of blood clots

- ✿ Make sure you know the potential signs of blood clots and let your care team know right away if you experience these symptoms.
- ✿ Follow your medication regimen during your hospital recovery.
- ✿ Stay hydrated throughout your hospital stay.
- ✿ Use your compression stockings if advised.
- ✿ Avoid sitting or lying in bed for long periods if possible.
- ✿ Walk as often as the staff looking after you recommend.
- ✿ Confirm all your post-operative instructions before leaving the hospital and talk with your medical team about strategies to reduce the likelihood of developing blood clots when you go home.
- ✿ Do not smoke.