You Are at Higher Risk for a Blood Clot!

Keep Sequential Compression Devices (SCDs) ON to Keep Blood Clots OFF

Deep Vein Thrombosis or DVT occurs when a blood clot forms in one of the large veins in the body, usually in the lower leg and thigh. When these blood clots break off, they can travel in the blood stream and block an artery in the lungs leading to a condition called Pulmonary Embolism or PE.

PE is a serious condition that can damage part of your lung because of lack of blood flow to your lung tissue. It can cause low oxygen levels in your blood and damage other organs in your body.

If a blood clot is large, or if there are many clots, PE can cause death.

Here is how you can decrease your risk of developing DVT:

1. Keep Your Sequential Compression Devices (SCDs) On!
   - Keep SCDs on for at least 20 hours a day
   - Keep SCDs on even when you are in bed or in a chair
   - Walk the length of the hallway, 4 times a day
   - It's ok to ask your nurse to put your SCDs back on
2. **Know the risk factors of DVT**

- Major Surgery
- Immobility, such as being in the hospital and long travel
- Recent injury
- Increased estrogen, from birth control pills, pregnancy, and certain medications
- Certain chronic medical illnesses, such as heart disease and cancer
- Previous DVT
- Age (risk increases as age increases)
- Obesity
- Smoking

3. **Know the Symptoms of DVT**

The following are the most common symptoms and occur in the affected part of the body (usually the leg):

- Swelling
- Pain
- Tenderness
- Redness of the skin

**While in the hospital, call your nurse or doctor immediately if you have any of the following Pulmonary Embolism symptoms (if you are at home, call 911):**

- Difficulty breathing
- Faster than normal heart beat
- Chest pain or discomfort, which usually worsens with a deep breath or coughing
- Coughing up blood
- Feeling dizzy or blacking out

*National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHBLI). What is Pulmonary Embolism?*  
http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/dvt/

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Are you at risk for Deep Vein Thrombosis?*  
http://www.cdc.gov/Features/Thrombosis/

*http://srxa.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/dvt.jpg*

*http://www.orthopedicresources.com/images/products/lrg_images/Kendall_2271_lrg.jpg*