

Prepare

for Hospitalization

A hospital stay can mean a lot of time off your feet – and therefore an increased risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT). The tips below can help prepare you for hospitalization so you can reduce your risk.

Your Doctor:

- Hospitalization can be a stressful prospect. Be sure to write down all of your questions before you meet with your physician, so you don't forget any.
- Make sure *all* your doctors (including your anesthesiologist) are aware of *each* and *every* prescription and over-the-counter medication you are taking.
- If going in for surgery, ask about donating your own blood, in case any is needed during the operation.
- Within a week of surgery, tell your doctor if you have any signs of a cold or other respiratory infection (fever, chills, coughing, runny nose).
- Also, the week before surgery you may need some laboratory tests.
- The night before surgery, you may be told to not drink or eat anything after midnight.

Exercise:

- If you have a hospitalization coming up, ask your physician what you can do to promote strong muscles and good circulation.
- If you're not already doing so, you may want to speak with your doctor about starting some moderate aerobic activity such as running, walking, swimming, or cycling. Always consult your physician before beginning any new physical activity.
- If you will be confined to a bed or chair, regular stretching and leg movement are vital to maintaining good circulation.
- Perform calf, leg and ankle exercises before and after surgery as discussed with your physician, and try to resume normal activity as soon as possible after surgery.

Know the risks:

- Become familiar with the risk factors for deep vein thrombosis. If you're at risk, or exhibit symptoms, be sure to inform your doctor and/or hospital.
- Avoid smoking.
- Maintain a healthy weight.

Be sure to ask:

- What are visiting hours, rules, and any limits?
- If you have any special dietary needs, make sure the hospital can accommodate them.
- Does the hospital offer preventive measures for patients at risk of developing DVT, like compression elastic stockings, external compression devices, and anticoagulant therapy?
- How long will you be off your feet?
- Are there specific exercises or activities the hospital recommends to help reduce the risk of DVT while hospitalized?