

HSE Blood clot alert card

What is a blood clot?

This is the formation of a clot inside a blood vessel, usually in the leg which may break off and go to the lungs. This can be fatal. 60% of blood clots happen in hospital or in the 90 days following admission. Blood clots can be very serious but there are effective treatments to deal with them and help prevent them.

Signs and symptoms of a blood clot:

- Swelling or pain in one leg or arm
- Warmth or redness in the leg or arm
- Short of breath or rapid breathing
- Chest pain (particularly when breathing deeply)
- Coughing or coughing up blood

If you have one or more of these, you may have a clot and you may need urgent treatment.

What can I do to help myself?

- Ask for your risk of blood clots to be assessed, especially if you are in one of the high-risk groups listed.
- Walk and move as much as possible.
- Drink plenty of fluids
- If directed to use stockings or medication to prevent or treat a blood clot, follow the instructions exactly.
- Remember a blood clot in the veins is more likely up **to 90 days** after being in hospital.
- If you have any signs or symptoms of a clot, take **immediate action** to seek medical help.

You may be at higher risk if you:

- Are admitted to hospital and for 90 days after you go home.
- Have active cancer or are receiving cancer treatment.
- Are pregnant or have had a baby less than 6 weeks ago.
- Become immobile (more than 3 days in bed) and /or travel non- stop more than 6 hours and /or are in a leg cast.

Risk may increase further if:

- You or a close relative had a clot.
- You had surgery in the last 90 days.
- You have thrombophilia (tendency to clot).
- You are on the oral contraceptive (OCP) or Hormone replacement therapy (HRT).
- You have heart, lung or inflammatory disease.
- You are over 60 years of age and overweight.
- You have varicose veins that have become red and sore.

For more information visit www.thrombosis.ie