

# How You Can Help Prevent Life Threatening Blood Clots

Patient/Home Help Line:  
800-862-2343



The best estimates indicate that 350,000 to 600,000 Americans each year suffer from DVT and PE, and that at least 100,000 deaths may be directly or indirectly related to these diseases.<sup>1</sup>

– Surgeon General’s Call to Action

#### References

1. Leavitt M: Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Prevent Deep Vein Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolism, 2008.
2. ©1998–2011 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research (MFMER)



## What are blood clots?

When blood forms a blockage or a clot inside your veins, it is called Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT). DVT usually forms in the lower leg or thigh. A DVT could break off from the wall of the vein, travel up in the body and get stuck in the lungs. This type of clot, called a Pulmonary Embolism (PE), can be fatal. With so many clot-related deaths every year, it is important to learn how to prevent DVT so that every preventative measure possible is taken.

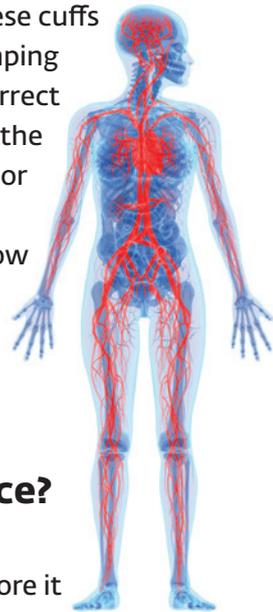


## What are some blood clot (DVT) risk factors? <sup>2</sup>

- ▶ Congestive Heart Failure
- ▶ Cancer
- ▶ Respiratory Failure
- ▶ Infectious Disease
- ▶ Age > 60
- ▶ Overweight/Obesity
- ▶ Smoking
- ▶ Prior or family history of DVT
- ▶ Pregnancy
- ▶ Oral contraceptives or hormone replacement therapy

## How do I help prevent blood clots?

After most surgeries, in the hospital and sometimes after you go home, you may be given sleeve-like cuffs. These cuffs are attached to an air pumping device that is set to the correct pressure. Once turned on, the cuffs will squeeze the legs or feet like a massage, which promotes normal blood flow and helps prevent clots.



## When should I be wearing this compression device?

The more you wear the compression device, the more it will help protect you. Whether you are at the hospital or at home, using and wearing the pump and cuffs all of the time is extremely important for preventing blood clots.

You should wear your compression device during the day and while you sleep. Use it in bed and use it in your chair. If the device is turned off or the cuffs are detached at any time during your hospital stay, it is advisable to contact a nurse for help in re-applying them as soon as possible. While at home, if you remove the device for any reason, make sure you re-apply as soon as possible.