



## **Preventing Deep Vein Thrombosis**

After a total joint replacement you have an increased risk of developing clots in the veins (deep venous thrombosis or DVT) of your legs or thighs for the first 3 months post-surgery. Most clots in the legs are not serious, but occasionally the clot can break loose and cause a serious problem in the lung, called a pulmonary embolism. It is uncommon for a pulmonary embolism to occur, but it may be life threatening if it does happen.

In order to minimize the risk of blood clotting issues please refer to the following recommendations:

- Keep hydrated. Drink adequate amounts of water to maintain good hydration. Avoid dehydrating drinks such as alcohol or caffeinated beverages.
- Minimize prolonged immobilization, such as sitting for many hours at a time.
- Wear elastic stockings and loose-fitting clothing.
- Avoid crossing your legs at your ankles or knees.
- Do not sleep in a cramped position and avoid the use of sleep aids.
- Regularly change leg position while seated and exercise legs by flexing and extending the ankles.
- Avoid sitting in such a way that may limit the ability for you to move your legs, such as sitting with your legs in a cramped space.

There are underlying risks factors that may make an individual at higher risk for blood clots. These include:

- Cancer
- Obesity
- Pregnancy
- Women taking oral contraceptives
- Women on estrogen replacement therapy
- History of blood clot formation
- Varicose veins
- Coronary artery disease
- Certain blood diseases

Additional preventative measures may be considered for patients who have any of the listed risk factors including taking anticoagulant medication (blood thinners) or baby aspirin. Feel free to discuss deep vein thrombosis prevention during your office visit.