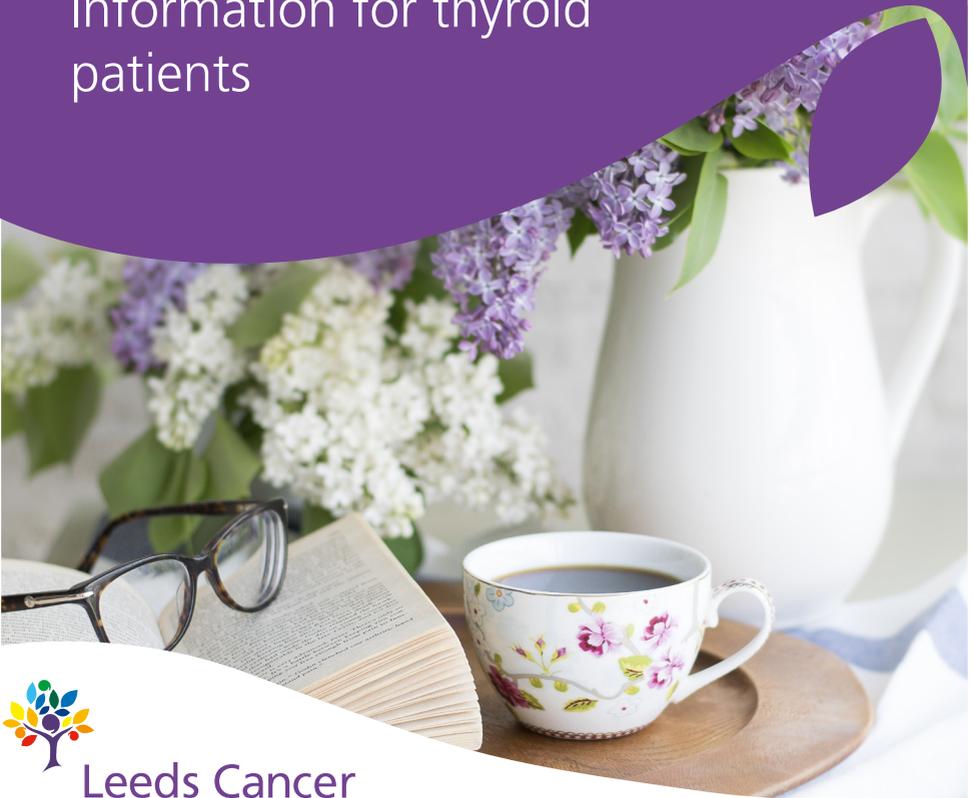


Cancer and blood clots

What you should know whilst
you are in source isolation

Information for thyroid
patients



Please read this leaflet carefully. It will give you information about decreasing the chance of developing a blood clot during and after your cancer treatment.

If you are living with cancer you will be aware that both the cancer and its treatment are associated with potential complications. One such complication is an increased risk of developing blood clots (also known as venous thromboembolism).

What is Venous Thromboembolism (VTE)?

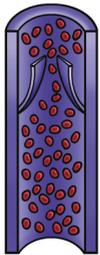
There are two types of VTE:

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT): a DVT is a blood clot (also known as a thrombosis) that forms in a deep vein, most commonly in the legs but they can also occur in the arms.

Pulmonary Embolism (PE): if all or part of the DVT breaks free and passes through your blood vessels, it can reach your lungs. This is called a PE.



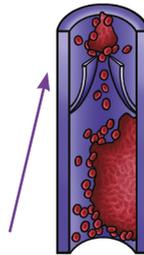
The vein in the leg



Normal blood flow



A clot has formed

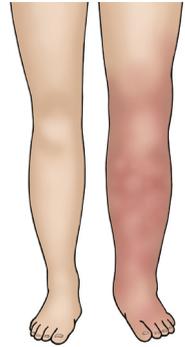


Part of the clot has broken off

Signs and symptoms of VTE

DVT - Symptoms can include swelling, redness/ discolouration, warmth and tenderness/pain of the legs that may be worse when standing or walking. Occasionally there are no symptoms except pain.

PE - Symptoms can include coughing, chest pain, breathlessness, blood stained phlegm and collapse.



If you develop any of these symptoms please get medical advice immediately.

Cancer Associated Thrombosis (CAT) is the name for a DVT or PE that develops when you also have cancer. Unfortunately, VTE is common in people with cancer.

There are several reasons why you might develop a VTE when you have cancer, they are detailed below:

Type of cancer

Having active cancer can increase your risk of developing a VTE. The types of cancer that are most likely to increase your risk of VTE are detailed below:

- Stomach
- Pancreas
- Lung
- Lymphoma
- Gynaecological
- Brain
- Kidney

Cancer treatments

Some cancer treatments can increase your risk of developing a VTE.

The types of treatment that are most likely to increase your risk of VTE are detailed below:

- Chemotherapy particularly cisplatin
- Hormone therapy such as: tamoxifen and anastrozole
- Immunomodulatory drugs such as: thalidomide and lenalidomide
- Antiangiogenic therapies such as bevacizumab and sunitinib
- Supportive agents such as erythropoietin and darbopoetin.

Other effects

Reduced mobility due to cancer treatments, blood vessel damage from surgery, or having a central venous catheter are other possible risk factors for getting a VTE.

Other risk factors for VTE

- Past history of VTE's
- Being overweight
- Reduced mobility (not walking or moving around)
- Combined contraceptives (i.e. the Pill, the contraceptive patch (Evra®) or the vaginal ring (Nuvaring®).

- Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- Recent surgery especially on hips or knees
- Age over 60 years
- Pregnancy or given birth in the past six weeks
- Dehydration
- Smoking
- Varicose veins with phlebitis
- A close relative has had a VTE e.g. mother, father, brother, sister, child
- Known thrombophilia (inherited blood clotting disorders)
- Long distance travel of more than four hours within the last eight weeks.

Fortunately, by becoming aware of the signs and symptoms of VTE and always keeping your healthcare providers informed, you can reduce the risks associated with this condition.

How can I help to reduce my risk of developing a VTE?

You can help reduce the risk of developing a VTE by:

- Keeping well hydrated (unless advised otherwise);
- Moving around as much as you can;

Carry out the following leg exercises (even if you are in bed):

- Lying on your back or sitting, bend and straighten your ankles quickly 10 times.
- Keep your knees straight during the exercise to stretch your calf muscles.
- Try to do this exercise two or three times an hour.



If you have any questions about the risk of developing a clot whilst you have cancer and are having cancer treatment speak to your doctor or nurse.

What do I do if I develop symptoms when I go home?

If you develop sudden shortness of breath and or chest pain:

Ring 999

If you develop new swelling, tenderness and/or pain of your leg or arm you should ring:

0113 243 3144

and ask for the Oncology Patient Enquiries Bleepholder

Useful sources of information

- Please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist for more information.
- NHS choices website for patient information on blood clots. Visit www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Thrombosis
- Lifeblood: The thrombosis charity also has more information. Visit www.thrombosis-charity.org.uk
- Anticoagulation Europe for information on anticoagulation. Visit www.anticoagulationeurope.org
- VTE support website. Visit www.vte-support.com



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