

Traveller Information Sheets



DVT Information Sheet.

What does DVT stand for?

DVT stands for Deep Vein Thrombosis. Essentially this means a blood clot. People travelling overseas on an aircraft will spend quite a lot of time sitting in one position. The risk for developing a blood clot (DVT) increases during a flight, especially when the traveller is inactive for long periods of time. DVT's can travel in the bloodstream to other areas of the body and cause damage or even death.

What are the risk factors for DVT?

- Past history of DVT.
- Family member with a past history of DVT or pulmonary embolism.
- Use of oral contraceptives for example, the pill or hormone replacement therapy (HRT).
- Pregnancy.
- Recent surgery or trauma, particularly to the abdomen, pelvic region or legs.
- Cancer.
- Obesity.
- Some inherited blood-clotting abnormalities.

How do you prevent DVT?

While travelling on an aircraft, it is recommended that travellers use the following tips:

- Walk around the aircraft at regular intervals.
- Avoid drinking excessive amounts of alcohol or coffee.
- Drink plenty of water to keep hydrated.
- Do foot exercises while you are seated –
 - With both feet flat in front of you flex your toes towards your body and hold for a few seconds.
 - Lift both heels off the ground and point toes towards the floor of the aircraft.
 - Lift one foot at a time and rotate your foot 5 times clock wise and then anti-clock wise.
- Select an aisle seat.
- Wearing properly fitted compression stockings whilst in the aircraft.

Should I take any medication to prevent DVT?

Some travellers are at an increased risk for developing DVT. These patients should seek expert advice prior to travelling; this may involve referral to a specialist.

References:

Centres for disease control and prevention 2013, Atlanta GA, viewed 7th April 2014, <<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/dvt>>

World Health Organisation 2014, Date viewed 7th April 2014, <http://www.who.int/ith/mode_of_travel/DVT/en/>