

# BLOOD CLOT PREVENTION

Blood clots may form in the deep veins of the legs, called a deep vein thrombosis. These blood clots can break off and move to other areas of the body. A blood clot that moves to the lungs is called a pulmonary embolism. Blood clots are rare but they can be dangerous and result in the need for extra medical care including blood thinners and in very rare cases, blood clots may result in death.

## AM I AT RISK FOR A BLOOD CLOT?

Women who are pregnant or have just given birth are at higher risk for developing blood clots. Additional factors may increase the risk for a blood clot further:

- + Cesarean delivery
- + Overweight or obese
- + Long labor
- + Preeclampsia or high blood pressure conditions
- + Smoking
- + Infection
- + Varicose veins
- + Twins or multiples during pregnancy
- + Personal or family history of a blood clot
- + Preterm delivery
- + Age over 35 years
- + Inherited blood clotting disorder (thrombophilia)
- + Certain health conditions (heart disease, lupus)

## WHAT ARE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BLOOD CLOTS?

- + Extreme swelling in your legs or arms
- + Leg pain or tenderness
- + Redness or skin discoloration of leg
- + Severe shortness of breath
- + Coughing blood

There are different ways that blood clots can be prevented including sequential compression devices and injections of blood thinners.

## WHAT ARE SEQUENTIAL COMPRESSION DEVICES?

Sequential compression devices are boots that squeeze your legs to help maintain circulation and prevent blood clots. We recommend these devices to all women after a cesarean delivery and other women at high risk for blood clots. These boots should be worn while in bed before you are ambulating.

## WHAT IS ENOXAPARIN?

Enoxaparin, also known as Lovenox® or low-molecular weight heparin, is a blood thinner taken by injection. It is given daily or twice daily based on your weight. Enoxaparin is used at a low dose, known as prophylaxis, to help prevent blood clots.

## HOW DO I TAKE ENOXAPARIN?

You or your caregiver may inject enoxaparin after learning the correct technique. We will teach you about how to give these injections to yourself and answer any questions before you leave the hospital. Your doctor will tell you how long you should continue the Enoxaparin based on your risk for having blood clots.

## WHAT TO EXPECT WHILE ON ENOXAPARIN?

You may notice some increased bruising and discomfort, especially at the sites of your enoxaparin injections. Some women also experience increased bleeding of the gums with tooth brushing or slight nose bleeds. If you experience bleeding that will not stop or excessive bruising, you should call your health care provider.

**If you have any questions about your enoxaparin or concerns about blood clots after hospital discharge, contact your healthcare provider. The University of Utah obstetrics offices may be reached at: 801-581-8425.**