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How to inject dalteparin (when wearing a leg cast or splint)

***Information for
patients and carers***

Emergency Department

Your injury means that your leg needs to be immobilised (kept still) in a splint or a cast.

We know that this may increase the risk of venous thromboembolism (or VTE) significantly in some people.

What is venous thromboembolism (VTE)?

VTE is a term which includes both:

- Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT), where blood clots develop in the leg veins, and
- Pulmonary Embolism (PE), when these blood clots dislodge and travel to the lungs

Why do I need dalteparin?

Your doctor or nurse has assessed your risk of developing VTE. We feel you would benefit from the prescription of a drug called dalteparin to reduce your risk of VTE.

We will give you a prescription and instructions on how to give yourself this medication. Please keep using this medication until your cast or splint is removed.

Do I need to change any of my medication?

Do not make any changes to your usual medication, including any hormone therapy or the contraceptive pill, unless advised to do so by the doctor or nurse practitioner.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you have any queries, please contact the Emergency Department where you had your treatment. The direct phone numbers are:

**Emergency Department
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary
☎ 01224 553306**

**Emergency Department
Dr Gray's Hospital, Elgin
☎ (01343) 567310**

Useful websites

www.know-who-to-turn-to.com

Can help you get the right medical assistance when you're ill, injured or have a long term condition.

www.nhsinform.scot

Type "DVT" in the Search box and click on the Guide to DVT for further information.

www.thrombosisuk.org (formerly known as Lifeblood)

Has lots of information about blood clots.

What symptoms should I look out for?

Possible symptoms of DVT (deep vein thrombosis)

- Swelling or pain in the leg.
- Calf tenderness.
- Noticeable heat and redness in the leg.

There are other causes of a painful and swollen calf, particularly after injury or surgery, so ask your GP if you have any concerns.

Possible symptoms of PE (pulmonary embolism)

- Sudden onset of breathlessness that is unusual for you.
- Chest pain or back pain that is unusual for you.
- Coughing or spitting up blood or blood-streaked mucus.
- Any episode of collapse.

What should I do if I have any of the symptoms of a DVT/PE?

Contact your GP immediately for advice or contact NHS 24:

NHS 24

 **111**

If you are very concerned dial 999

What is dalteparin?

Dalteparin is a medicine that reduces the tendency for the blood to clot inside the body.

How do I give myself dalteparin?

You inject dalteparin under your skin (this is known as a subcutaneous injection). Before you leave hospital, staff will show you how to use the syringes and you can also practise before you leave.

To inject yourself:

1. Get yourself in a comfortable position where you can see your stomach.
2. Choose an area to inject yourself (preferably into your tummy area or the sides of your thighs).
3. Squeeze the skin between your thumb and forefinger to create a skin fold. Keep holding the skin fold during the injection.
4. With the syringe in your other hand, push the total length of the needle **vertically**, not at an angle, into the thick part of the skin fold.

You may have a temporary stinging sensation when the injection is given. This is normal.

Don't rub the area around the injection site.

Does dalteparin have any side-effects?

Your doctor will check your blood before you start dalteparin injections to make sure that you are okay to receive this medication.

Dalteparin increases the risk of bleeding and it can lead to bruising at the site of the injection. This is common and expected. Ask a nurse or doctor if the bruises are very big or are worrying you.

Other side effects from dalteparin injections are not common. However, if you have any of the following please contact a medical professional:

- Blood in your bowel motions or urine.
- Coughing or vomiting blood.
- Heavy or persistent nose bleeds.
- Unexplained visible bruising.

How long do I take dalteparin?

Please keep using this medication until your cast or splint is removed.

What dose do I take?

We provide dalteparin as ready-made doses in pre-filled syringes. Each dose is in one syringe. Inject yourself with entire contents of one syringe once a day at the same time every day.

Where do I get the syringes?

We give you a starter pack of seven injections of dalteparin when you leave the Emergency Department.

We also give you a sharps bin for used syringes and needles and a DVD to watch.

It is important you see your General Practitioner in the first few days so they can prescribe you with a continuing supply of injections and a larger sharps bin.

How do I dispose of the used syringes?

Do not dispose of any syringes in ordinary bins or in household waste. We give you a special sharps bin for the used syringes. When you finish your treatment, please take this bin to your GP surgery for disposal.

What can I do to reduce my risk of VTE?

There are some precautions that you can take to reduce your risk of VTE:

- Keep a healthy weight.
- Keep moving or walking. Leg exercises are valuable, moving your toes and knee (if possible).
- Drink plenty of fluid to keep hydrated.