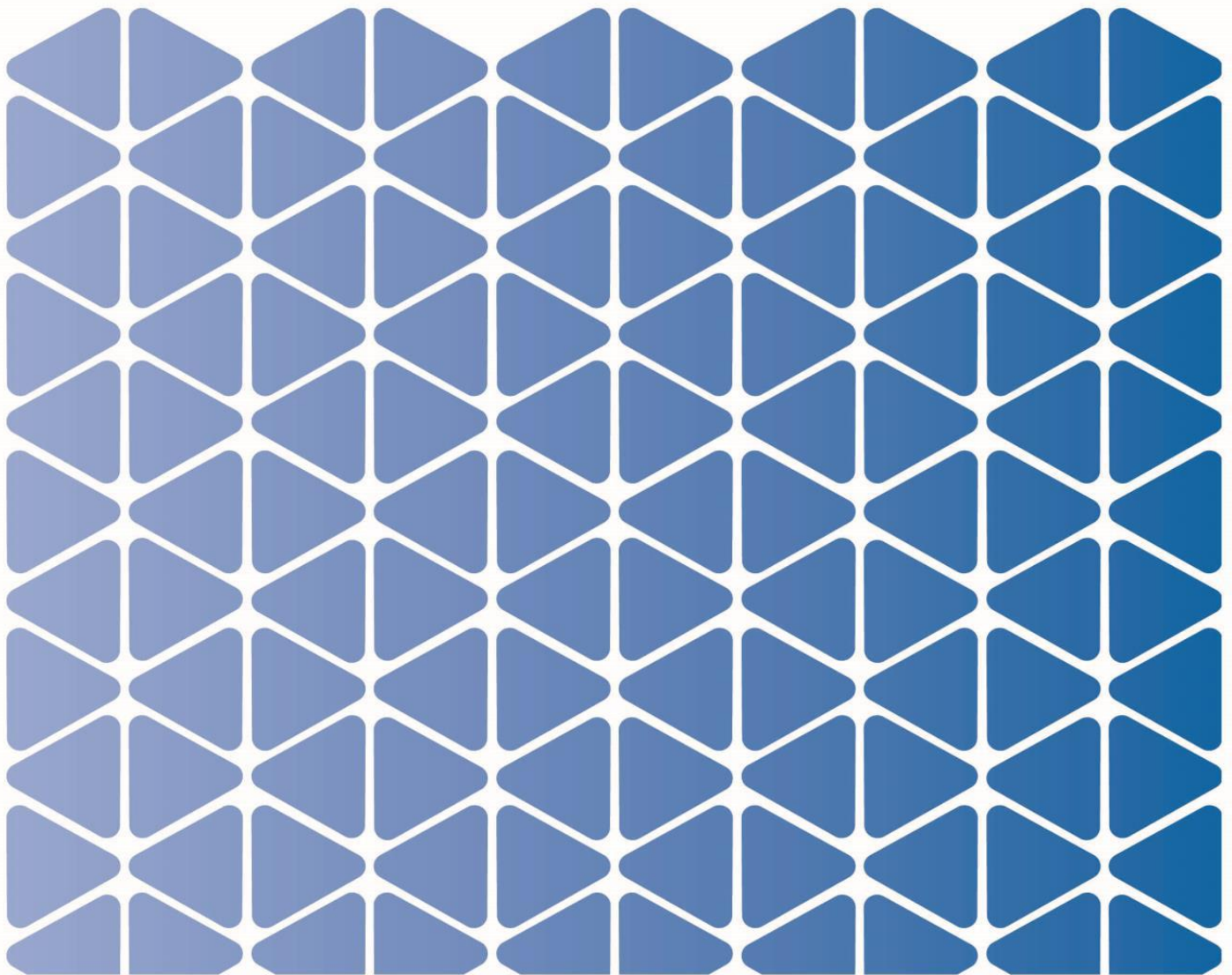


PATIENT INFORMATION

# DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS

## A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS



## **What is a DVT?**

DVT occurs when a clot forms in the deep vein, most commonly in the leg but can occur in the other veins too. This may cause the vein to become partially or completely blocked.

## **What are the causes?**

A blood clot develops when the blood cells stick together. There are 3 main factors that may trigger a clot to form in the vein:

- Reduced blood flow
- Changes in the clotting mechanism of the blood
- Changes to the smooth lining of the blood vessel

## **Who is at risk to developing a DVT?**

You are more likely to develop a DVT if you have the following risk factors:

- Aged over 40
- Had a previous clot
- Family history of blood clots
- Existing health problems e.g. Cancer or blood disease
- Recent surgery or illness causing immobility
- Pregnancy, contraceptive pill or hormone replacement therapy
- Overweight
- Extended travel

Some people do not have any of these risk factors but can still develop a DVT.

## **What are the signs and symptoms of DVT?**

- Symptoms may include:
- Pain in the calf
- Swelling
- Tenderness
- Redness or discolouration
- Difficulty with weight bearing

## **Why is DVT a cause for concern?**

A serious complication of DVT is a pulmonary embolism (PE) which is when the blood clot or part of it can break off and travel to the lung. Symptoms of a PE may include:

- Shortness of breath
- Pain in the chest or ribs
- Difficulty in breathing
- Dizziness
- Coughing up blood

If you suspect you have a PE you should seek urgent medical attention or dial 999  
PE is not common but can be life threatening.

## **Treatment of DVT**

Treatment is necessary to:

- Prevent the clot getting bigger
- Reduce the risk of pulmonary embolism (PE)
- Relieve the symptoms of DVT
- Prevent post-thrombotic syndrome (PTS)

Treatment includes Anticoagulation drugs such as Heparin (injection) and Warfarin (tablets), leg elevation and compression stockings.

## **Patient Experience**

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

## **Feedback**

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

## **How to contact PALS:**

**Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: [wah-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.PET@nhs.net)**

## **Opening times:**

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.