



# INTERMITTENT COMPRESSION PUMPS

## Protect Yourself from Deep Vein Thrombosis with Intermittent Compression Pumps

### Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) – What Does It Mean?

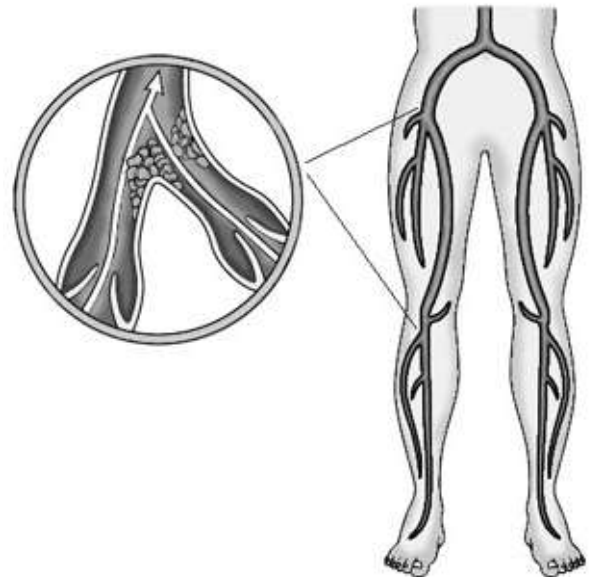
DVT (Deep Vein Thrombosis) occurs when a blood clot forms in one of the deep veins in the body. Without treatment a DVT can cause a potentially life threatening condition called Pulmonary Embolism (PE). PE occurs when a blood clot breaks off from a vein and travels to the lungs.

DVT is a major cause of illness and death in the United States. It has been estimated that up to 900,000 DVTs occur per year, resulting in approximately 100,000 deaths.<sup>1</sup>

### Could I Be At Risk?

Most people in the hospital have at least one risk factor for DVT. Some risk factors are:

- Age over 40
- Smoking
- Being bedbound
- Having one of the following conditions:
  - Chronic lung disease
  - Heart failure
  - Serious infection
  - Recovering from surgery
  - Inflammatory bowel diseases
  - Cancer
  - Varicose veins



**Deep vein thrombosis** is the formation of a thrombus (blood clot) within a deep vein, most often in the thigh or calf.

<sup>1</sup> *The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety, 2011.*

## How Do I Prevent It?



Intermittent Compression Pump (ICP) is a method of DVT prevention that improves blood flow in the legs. ICP's are shaped like sleeves that wrap around the legs and inflate with air one at a time. This imitates walking and helps prevent blood clots. You should wear your ICP's at any time you are in bed or sitting in a chair. The ICP's must be removed for walking.

Foot exercises are also important to prevent the formation of a blood clot. Point your toes toward the bottom of the bed, then up toward your face. Repeat 10 times an each hour while you are awake.

You should also be out of bed as much as you are in bed and walk in the halls at least six times per day if your doctor approves it.

If you are on fall precautions, ask for help from the hospital workers before you get out of bed.

## How Do I know If I have A DVT?

The most common symptoms of a DVT are swollen and tender calves. Other symptoms include:

- Red areas on the leg
- Swelling in one area or on one leg
- Pain or tenderness in one leg
- An area on the leg that feels much warmer to the touch

If you notice any of these symptoms, let your nurse or doctor know right away.

## What are the dangers of a DVT?

If you get a DVT, you may find yourself with:

- Pain
- Pulmonary Embolism (PE). This can be life-threatening.
- A longer hospital stay
- An increased chance of getting another blood clot in the future
- Additional treatment after you leave the hospital

Why put yourself at risk. Using your ICP's will help you avoid these problems.

## Be Your Own Advocate

DVT's can develop no matter how careful you are with your health but you can take action to prevent them. Educate yourself about the risk factors and take steps to prevent DVT's; use your ICD's, do the foot exercises, and get out of bed. Be your own health advocate!