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Preventing Blood Clots After Surgery

Deep vein thrombosis, or DVT, occurs when a blood clot forms in one of the deep veins of the body. This can happen if a vein becomes damaged or if the blood flow within a vein slows down or stops. While there are a number of risk factors for developing DVT, a significant one is having major surgery. Below are the recommendations to follow:

Baby Aspirin

Aspirin 162 milligram (2 baby aspirin) is required to be taken for six weeks following partial or total joint surgery. Dr. Zechmann recommends taking baby aspirin for 4 weeks following general surgery, starting the day after surgery, unless otherwise instructed by Dr/ Zechmann's team.

Calf Pumps

Point toes on both feet towards the ceiling then towards the floor 10 times every 30 to 45 minutes while awake.

Walking

Get up and walk at least 10 steps every 60 to 90 minutes while awake with any necessary walking devices (walker, cane).

SCD's

Sequential compression devices or "leg squeezers" can be helpful when used in addition to the above actions. They are to be worn at night (do not need to be worn all night if not tolerated) for at least two weeks. Also during any car ride over 30 minutes as well as any flights for two months after surgery.

Some symptoms of DVT can include severe increased pain and swelling in the lower leg, especially in the calf, in association with noticeable color change other than bruising.

If a blood clot leaves the leg and travels to the lungs, symptoms can include sudden onset of chest pain, shortness of breath and slash or coughing.

If you experience the above symptoms, please contact your surgeon's office (360-789-8990 x 2109) or the on-call team if it is after business hours.