

# Blood Clots and Travelling

Travellers who spend a long time sitting during travel are at a higher risk of developing a blood clot in their legs. Although less common, if the clot breaks off and travels to the lung or brain, it can cause a pulmonary embolism or a stroke. To minimize your risk, you should always take protective measures to avoid developing clots.

## Who's at risk?

- Air travel, less so with train, bus or car travel
- Previous personal or family history of a clot
- Clotting disorder
- Recent surgery or hospitalization
- Using estrogen containing birth control or menopause therapy
- Current or recent pregnancy
- Older age
- Obesity
- Active cancer
- Congestive heart failure or inflammatory bowel disease
- Limited movement

## Preventing Clots

- Get up occasionally and walk around.
- Do exercises while you are sitting:
  - raise and lower your heels while keeping your toes on the floor
  - raise and lower your toes while keeping your heel on the floor
  - tighten your leg muscles
- Wear properly fitted compression stockings

## What to do if you get a clot?

Being able to recognize the symptoms of a clot is helpful in order to seek immediate medical attention from a doctor or hospital.

Clot in leg (DVT): swelling, pain or tenderness in affected leg, skin is red and warm to the touch

Clot in lungs (PE): difficulty breathing, faster than normal heartbeat, chest pain that gets worse when you breathe deeply, coughing up blood

Clot in brain (stroke): sudden numbness or weakness on one side of the body, sudden confusion, inability to speak, blurry vision, loss of balance