How long will I have to wear the stockings?

You will need to wear the stockings day and night until you no longer have significantly reduced mobility. You may still need to wear them after you go home, especially if recommended by a doctor. If you have had a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) in the past, or a history of blood cloting disorders, you will be given specific instructions about wearing the stockings at home.

How to look after yourself and your stockings

- Remove your stockings for 30 minutes every day to inspect your skin and undertake personal hygiene. Your stockings should then be put back on.
- Clean stockings should be put on every three days, or sooner if they become dirty.
- You should do your leg exercises to encourage improved blood flow.
- Do not attempt to walk without wearing well-fitting slippers or shoes.
- Do not leave the stockings rolled down your legs. This cancels the benefit of wearing them.
- Avoid using ointments, oils or lanolin on your skin as these can damage the stocking fibres and make the stocking slip down.
- Be aware of pain and/or numbness, pins and needles or discoloration of your toes, leg swelling or blistering. This could mean that the stockings are too tight. Tell the nurse looking after you if you have any of these problems. If you are wearing stockings at home, contact your GP if you have any problems with them.
Blood clots
A blood clot (known as embolisms) develops initially in the large leg veins due to poor or slow blood flow. Past or present medical history, a surgical procedure, medications, pregnancy or recently giving birth can place a person at greater risk of forming a blood clot.

Blood clots are the cause of the greatest number of preventable hospital deaths and a condition that can affect patients of any age.

How do anti-embolism stockings work?
If correctly applied, anti-embolism stockings assist and improve the flow of blood in your veins by speeding up the circulation of blood. This makes clotting less likely.

Anti-embolism stockings can be worn on their own or used in addition to anti-coagulation medications that thin the blood (such as enoxaparin or warfarin) in patients who have been assessed as ‘at risk’ of clot formation. They have particular importance in patients where anti-coagulation medication cannot be prescribed.

How will I get a pair?
If you need anti-embolism stockings a member of the nursing staff will measure your leg(s) and select the correct size for you. These may fit up to your knee or thigh.

How to put on your stocking(s)
The stockings will be a ‘snug’ fit, so accurate measuring and size selection is important. Putting on the stockings can be difficult because they fit closely and therefore you should follow the guidance on the next page.

1 Insert your hand into the foot area of the stocking.
2 Grasp the centre of the heel pocket and turn the stocking inside out, stopping at the heel.
3 Carefully position the stocking over your foot and heel, making sure your heel is located in the heel pocket.
4 Pull the body of the stocking up and around your ankle and calf and/or up to your thigh.
5 For thigh stockings only, ensure the gusset is positioned over the inside and top of your thigh.
6 Smooth out any excess material. Pull the toe section forward to smooth the ankle and instep area and allow your toes to be comfortable.

Please also read information in stocking packet.