

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT), Pulmonary Embolism (PE) and Brain Tumours

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Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot in one of the deep veins of the leg.

Pulmonary embolism (PE) is a blockage (blood clot) in the pulmonary artery which is the blood vessel that carries blood from the heart to the lungs. It is potentially life threatening.

Risk factors include:

- Age 60 years plus
- Glioblastoma diagnosis
- Large tumour size
- Subtotal resection of tumour
- Chemotherapy
- Neurosurgery within the past 2 months
- Leg paralysis
- A or AB blood type

Signs and Symptoms

DVT

- Pain, redness, swelling around the area where the clot is.
- The area around the clot may feel warm to touch.
- Most likely to form in the thigh, groin or lower leg.

PE

- Chest pain - a sharp stabbing pain that worsens when you breathe in.
- Shortness of breath - can come on suddenly or develop gradually.
- Coughing - usually dry but may include blood or mucus.
- Faint, dizzy or passing out.

You should see your GP immediately if you have a combination of these symptoms.

If your symptoms are particularly severe, dial 999 for an ambulance.

How are DVTs/PEs treated?

- They are treated with anti-coagulation medication. These stop the blood clot from getting bigger while your body reabsorbs it and reduces your risk of further clots developing.

- Enoxaparin (clexane) is an anti-coagulation injection, commonly used. It is given sub-cutaneously, into the fatty layer of the abdomen for three to six months.

To maintain good blood circulation and prevent further clots keep mobile, avoid long periods of inactivity and lead a healthy life style such as stopping smoking.

Frequently asked Questions

Should all patients with brain tumours have preventative anti-coagulation medication?

There is a long-standing reluctance to treat with therapeutic anti-coagulation due to the risk of intracranial haemorrhage. Therefore patients are treated as they present with a DVT/PE.

Useful Contacts

www.braintumour.org.uk Telephone: 0845 4500 386

Macmillan Cancer Information + Support Centre, Lincoln County Hospital
Telephone: 01522 573799

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