

Recommendations Regarding Air Travel or Long Car Rides Following Leg, Knee or Ankle Surgery

You may be at an increased risk of developing a blood clot or deep venous thrombosis (DVT) in your leg following any type of leg, knee or ankle surgery. This risk is present even with minimally invasive arthroscopic surgery. The risk of this occurring is small but this is of concern because it can result in illness. In some cases the DVT can cause harm by embolizing or moving to another part of your body. In rare cases it can go to your lungs and be potentially fatal.

Prevention

Early mobilization, weight bearing and use of the injured extremity is the best way to prevent a DVT from occurring. In some cases, DVTs can be prevented with medications, leg squeezers, or support stockings. However, these interventions are not always indicated and when used do not necessarily prevent the formation of a DVT.

Recommendations

In order to minimize the chance for DVT formation, it is recommended that you avoid all plane travel as well as long car rides for a minimum of 4 weeks after surgery. If you must travel during this time, the risk of DVT formation can probably be decreased by drinking lots of water, avoiding alcohol, walking regularly and taking aspirin prior to travel. However, these measures may not necessarily prevent the formation of DVT.

