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Prevention of Blood Clots after Total Hip and Total Knee Replacement

Patients undergoing joint replacement must take medication (blood thinners) to prevent blood clots in the legs and lungs. Three alternatives are recommended as being effective: Aspirin, Lovenox or Coumadin. My first choice for you is **Aspirin**. It is easy to take, inexpensive and has very few side effects. You will take one enteric coated 325mg aspirin tablet (**Ecotrin** or equivalent**)** twice a day, for 6 weeks. If you have a true allergy to aspirin (rash, hives, breathing difficulty, etc.) then we would then use either **Lovenox** or **Coumadin**.

These medicines are started in the hospital after surgery and continued by you at home. The dosage and duration of treatment varies depending upon which drug we use and your operation. **Lovenox** is given by self-administered injection (or by a family member). It is taught to you in the hospital and is very easy to do. After the **Lovenox** prescription is finished**,** you must take one 325mg enteric coated **Aspirin** twice a day (if not allergic) until you are 6 weeks after surgery. **Coumadin** is a tablet usually taken once a day. When you go home the dose must be monitored and adjusted based upon the results of blood tests done once or twice a week.

In the hospital, you will be using **compressive air "leggings"** after your surgery. They are worn to reduce swelling and blood clots until you are up and walking.

If you had a hip replacement, you will also have a prescription for **Indocin** (Indomethacin) to prevent extra bone formation around the hip. It is usually prescribed with a medication (**Prilosec, Nexium** or similar drug) to protect irritation of the stomach.

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