Statins could prevent BLOOD CLOTS: Pills 'reduce threat of serious condition by 25%'

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STATINS could prevent potentially fatal blood clots - the leading cause of hospital deaths, according to new research.

The cholesterol lowering pills, commonly used to prevent heart attacks, reduces the threat of the condition by up to 25 per cent.

Venous thromboembolism (VTE), where blood clots form in the vein in the lungs or in limbs, kill about 25,000 people in England each year.

The research, published in The Lancet Haematology journal, may lead to new [health](http://www.express.co.uk/latest/Health) guidelines and an expansion of the use of treatment, which is already established in warding off cardiovascular disease.

Professor Kamlesh Khunti, of the Leicester Diabetes Centre, said: “These findings underscore a potential beneficial role of statin therapy on VTE in addition to its established role in cardiovascular disease prevention.”

Being unwell and having reduced mobility - such as that of a short-time in hospital - can lead to changes in blood flow.

These make the deadly clots more likely, explaining the increased risk for patients undergoing operations.

The study found the drugs were likely to cut the risk of the deadly condition by reducing inflammation - one of the factors involved in clot formation.

Study leader Dr Setor Kunutsor, of Bristol University, added: “Currently, statins are only approved for lipid lowering in the primary and secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease.

“But they have shown great promise beyond their established lipid lowering effects and these include potential beneficial impact on multiple disease conditions.

“These results provide an extensive body of evidence on the clinical benefit of statin in the occurrence of VTE and may support a true protective effect.”

Every year, thousands of people in the UK develop a blood clot in a vein. Although serious, most can be completely avoided. The key is to be aware if you're at risk and take some simple preventative steps.

Anyone can get a blood clot, but you're more at risk if you can't move around much or if you're unwell. They can be caused by long-haul plane journeys or the contraceptive pill, but most actually develop during or just after a stay in hospital.

Your risk is also increased if you are over 60 years old, are overweight or obese, have had a blood clot before, are having hormone replacement therapy (HRT), are pregnant or have recently given birth.

In 2005, a House of Commons Health Committee report stated that every year in England an estimated 25,000 deaths occur as a result of hospital-acquired VTE.

The report also stated that the estimated number of deaths due to VTE, “is more than the combined total of deaths from breast cancer, AIDS and traffic accidents, and more than 25 times the number who die from MRSA”.

The Government recognises that deaths from hospital blood clots are preventable and has recommended that all patients admitted to hospital should be assessed for their risk of developing blood clots, and measures to reduce this risk should be taken when appropriate.