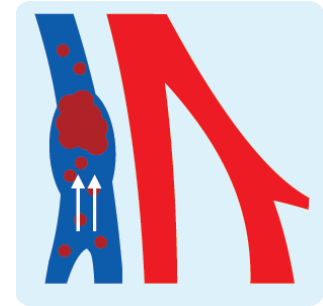


Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)

DVT is a blood clot that forms in the deep veins in the body. Blood clots occur if there are changes to blood flow, changes that make the blood more coagulated or when there is damage to the blood vessel wall such as with surgery.



Most deep vein blood clots occur in the lower leg or thigh, however, they can also occur in other parts of the body such as the arms or neck or brain or abdomen.

A blood clot in a deep vein can break off and travel through the bloodstream. The loose clot is called an embolus. It can travel to an artery in the lungs and block blood flow in the lungs which can put pressure on the heart. This condition is called pulmonary embolism (PE) and can be a very serious condition. Remember this simple equation: DVT + PE = VTE.

Signs and symptoms

Pain or tenderness
Swelling
Discoloration
Warmth

Risk factors

Being in the hospital
Surgery
Bed rest
Immobility
Medical history
Obesity
Cancer

Supplemental estrogen
Pregnancy
Smoking
Age
Heart disease

Thrombosis does not discriminate.

Blood clots can affect anyone regardless of location, age, ethnicity or race. Preventing DVT involves adopting healthy lifestyle habits and taking steps to reduce your risk factors. Strategies include regular exercise, maintaining a healthy weight, quit smoking, stay hydrated, avoid sitting or standing for long periods of time and take medicines as prescribed.

The most important thing you can do to protect yourself from a life-threatening blood clot is to learn if you are at risk. Know the signs and symptoms and contact your healthcare professional immediately if needed.