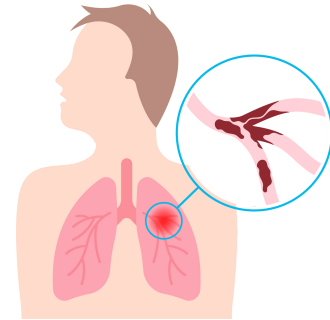


# Pulmonary embolism (PE)

A PE is a blockage in a lung artery. The blockage usually is caused by a blood clot that travels to the lung from a vein in the leg, also known as deep vein thrombosis (DVT). A clot that forms in one part of the body and travels in the bloodstream to another part of the body is called an embolus.



PE is a serious condition that can:

- Damage part of your lung because of a lack of blood flow to your lung tissue. This damage may lead to pulmonary hypertension (increased pressure in the pulmonary arteries).
- Cause low oxygen levels in your blood.
- Damage other organs in your body because of a lack of oxygen.

## Signs and symptoms

Shortness of breath  
Rapid breathing  
Chest pain  
Lightheadedness  
Passing out  
Coughing up blood

## 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 a PE involves taking steps to reduce the risk of blood clots. Prevention strategies include following DVT prevention strategies, taking medicines as prescribed, take precautions during long trips, stay active after hospitalization or surgery and know your risk factors.

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.