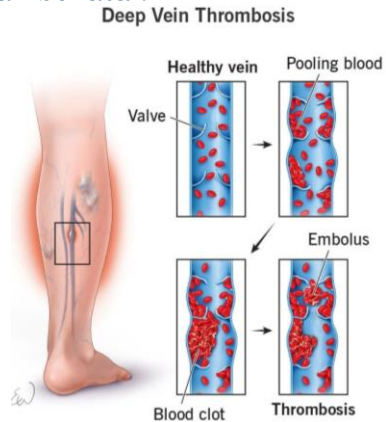


What is Deep Vein Thrombosis?

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot that forms in a deep vein, often in the calf or thigh. The clot can partially or completely block blood flow and damage blood vessels. If a blood clot breaks free, it can travel to the lungs and cause pulmonary embolus (PE), which can be fatal.



Who Can Develop a DVT?

There is a chance anyone can develop a blood clot at any time. However, when you are sick in hospital, your chance of developing a blood clot is much higher.

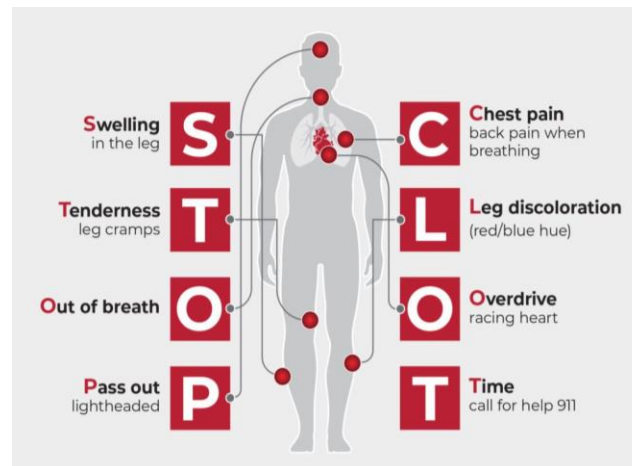
Why are Blood Clots so Dangerous?

Blood clots can prevent oxygen from reaching tissues in your body. Without oxygen, your tissues will be damaged. A blood clot can cause pain and swelling, and can also be life threatening. Blood clots that travel to your lungs can be deadly. It is very important for you to watch your body for signs of blood clots and seek medical attention if you have signs or symptoms.

General Tips for Preventing DVT

There are many things you can do to lower your risk of DVT.

- Maintain an active lifestyle and exercise regularly. Walking, swimming and biking are great exercise activities.
- Manage your weight with exercise as well as by eating a healthy diet based on Canada's Food Guide.
- Avoid smoking. Smoking causes vasoconstriction which restricts normal blood flow throughout the body.
- Get your blood pressure checked regularly and take steps to lower it if necessary.
- Speak to your family doctor about any personal or family history of blood clotting problems.



STOP THE CLOT

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) Patient Guide



DVT Risk Factors

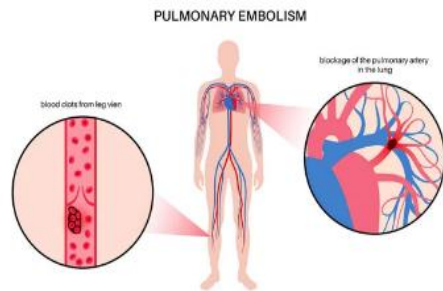
The risk factors of developing DVT are greatest during the 10 days following surgery. Other common risk factors for DVT include:

- Limited mobility
- Congestive heart failure
- Personal or family history of blood clotting (DVT)
- Smoking
- Being overweight
- Respiratory failure
- Medications such as birth control
- Age- those who are 40 and older have a greater risk

How do you know if you have a blood clot?

A blood clot in the leg is called Deep Vein Thrombosis or DVT. Symptoms include: pain or tenderness, swelling, and warm red skin.

A blood clot that travels to the lung is a Pulmonary Embolism or PE. Symptoms include: breathing problems, chest pain, sudden fainting, and coughing up blood.



DVT Prevention Exercises

There are a few simple exercises you can do to help prevent DVT, particularly in situations where you are immobile for a long time.

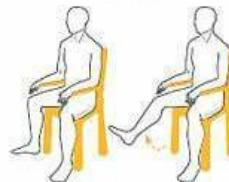
Toe Lifts- With your heels on the floor, lift the toes and front of the foot as high as possible then put both feet on the floor. This keeps your calf muscles working to prevent blood from pooling.



Ankle Rotation- One foot at a time, rotate your foot clockwise and counterclockwise for 30 seconds as shown. Sit with your knees bent and circle your foot first clockwise then counterclockwise. While doing the exercises, be sure that you are moving your foot at the ankle. Your leg or knee should not move.



Chair Leg Raises- Keeping your right leg straight slowly lift off the floor, hold for a moment, then slowly bring it back down. Repeat the movement with your left leg.



Preventing DVT When you Travel

There is evidence to suggest that the risk of developing DVT may increase when you take a long car ride or airplane trip. Talk with your doctor if you are planning a trip during which you will be in a car or plane for an extended period of time. Your doctor may recommend that you wear compression stockings while you travel.

- Use the aisle of the plane or get out of the car to walk at least every hour.
- Flex and point your feet at least every 20 minutes
- Stay hydrated. Drink a large glass of water every two hours.
- Avoid caffeinated or alcoholic beverages.



For more information view our patient and family information guide:



Developed in collaboration with patient and family partners.



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