



Focus on Clots

**Blood clots:
What YOU need to know.**



What are blood clots?

Blood clots are common, potentially life-threatening, *but treatable* and *generally preventable disorders* that include two related conditions:

- 1) **Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)** – This involves abnormal clotting of the blood in a deep vein. DVT most commonly occurs in one or more veins of the leg or pelvis.
and
- 2) **Pulmonary embolism (PE)** – This occurs when a DVT breaks free from its original site in a vein and then travels through the bloodstream into the lungs.

Why should I be concerned about blood clots?

- Up to 1 million Americans suffer from blood clots every year, often resulting in hospitalization
- More than 100,000 Americans die from PE every year, which is more than deaths from breast cancer, AIDS, and traffic accidents combined
- Blood clots can kill quickly, and also result in long-term leg pain, swelling, and difficulty walking
- Although blood clots are common, few Americans have any knowledge about blood clots and how to prevent them

The Venous Disease Coalition wants you to become aware of the risk factors for blood clots as well as the warning symptoms of blood clots so you can protect yourself and your family.

DVT and PE should be considered emergencies that require immediate care if any of the symptoms below are present!

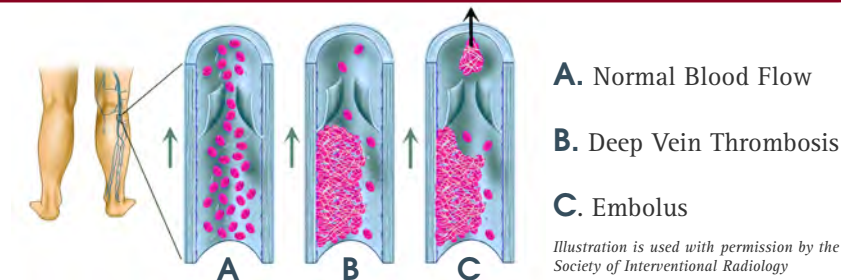
Symptoms of Possible DVT

- Recent swelling of one leg
- Unexplained pain or tenderness of one leg

Symptoms of Possible PE

- Recent or sudden shortness of breath
- Sharp chest pain, especially when breathing in
- Coughing up blood
- Sudden collapse

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)



What are risk factors for blood clots?

Some of the risk factors for blood clots include the following:

- Recent major surgery
- Cancer and its treatment
- Major trauma or injuries to the leg
- Previous DVT or PE
- Hospitalization with an acute medical illness
- Recent immobility
- Pregnancy
- Use of the birth control pill or hormone replacement therapy
- A family history of DVT or PE
- Obesity

How are blood clots treated?

Both DVT and PE are treated with anticoagulants which are sometimes called “blood thinners”. Anticoagulants decrease the blood’s ability to clot to a controlled degree. They stop clots from getting bigger and prevent new clots from forming. Compression stockings may be prescribed to reduce the risk of vein valve damage, pain and swelling long-term.

What can be done to prevent blood clots?

In general

- Stay active
- Don’t smoke or stop smoking if you do
- Maintain a normal body weight

In the hospital

- The risk of blood clots in hospitals can generally be prevented with low doses of an anticoagulant or by other means
- Be sure to discuss the prevention of blood clots with your doctor before elective surgery
- Tell doctors and nurses that you want them to prevent the development of blood clots
- Move your legs often and walk frequently if this is possible
- Report any unexplained chest or leg symptoms to staff



Venous Disease Coalition
www.venousdiseasecoalition.org

The Venous Disease Coalition (VDC) is an alliance of leading health professional societies and patient advocacy groups united to improve the survival rates and quality of life for individuals with, or at risk for, venous disease. It is a division of the Vascular Disease Foundation, a national 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Printing is courtesy of unrestricted educational grants from: AngioDynamics Inc., BioMedix, BSN Jobst, Cook Medical, Eisai Inc., and Juzo.

