

DVT: Could you be at risk?

What is DVT?

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) occurs when a blood clot forms inside the deep veins of the body, usually in the leg. The clot can then block the flow of blood in the vein, partially or completely.

DVT and pulmonary embolism

One of the most serious complications of DVT is pulmonary embolism (PE) which occurs when a clot breaks loose, travels through the veins and blocks blood flow to the lungs.

Signs and symptoms

Contact your doctor if you notice:

- Pain, tenderness, sudden swelling in the leg
- Red or discolored skin
- Leg feels warm to the touch
- Visibly enlarged veins

Seek urgent medical help if you experience:

- Unexplained shortness of breath
- Rapid heart rate or palpitations
- Coughing up blood
- Fatigue and/or fainting
- Excessive sweating
- Anxiety or nervousness
- Very low blood pressure

Risk factors

DVT can occur in anyone but certain conditions put some people at higher risk.

Factors that might increase your risk of developing DVT include:

- Age 40 and over
- Smoking
- Obesity
- Heart failure
- Cancer
- Personal or family history of blood clots or blood-clotting disorders
- Stroke
- Varicose veins
- Surgery, including hip, knee or stomach surgery or other major surgeries
- Reduced movement caused by injuries, hospitalization, certain illnesses and surgery
- Pregnancy
- Use of birth control pills
- Lung disease
- Prolonged bed confinement

Preventing DVT

If you feel you are at risk of developing DVT, take the first step in preventing it by talking to your doctor today about risk factors and/or symptoms affecting you.

