

Deep Vein Thrombosis

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) is the formation of a blood clot in a deep vein.

DVT commonly affects the leg veins such as the femoral vein but can affect almost any vein in the body. Commonly, this results in pain, swelling, warmth and redness of the affected limb. If the clot dislodges, it can travel to the lungs and cause a pulmonary embolism.

A DVT can occur as a result of several medical conditions like physical trauma, dehydration, cancer, or nephrotic syndrome. The risk for a DVT increases with certain factors including smoking , using the birth control pill ,pregnancy, obesity , immobilization , long trips where ones activity is restricted, and inherited tendencies for thrombophilia like Factor V Leiden.

Diagnosis

A DVT can be diagnosed using a blood test called a d-Dimer and imaging by ultrasound.

Signs and Symptoms

The classic signs of a DVT are pain, redness, swelling and dilation of the surface veins in the affected limb.

Treatments for DVT

Blood thinner medications are the most common form of treatment for DVT. Typically patients are started on heparin for a short time and then transitioned to [warfarin](#) or [enoxaparin](#) for 3 to 6 months.

Patients who have infection in conjunction with a DVT are more likely to be kept on heparin for the entire treatment course.

Occasionally, for an extensive clot thrombolysis is used. This involves injecting a medication into the thrombosis and manually attempting to break it up.

Compression stockings may be used to aid blood flow back to the heart by exerting pressure on the affected limb. This prevents blood from pooling and reduces pain and swelling.

[Post Thrombotic Syndrome](#)

Prevention

- Stay active with regular exercise
- Stay well hydrated
- Avoid obesity
- Don't smoke
- Don't take the birth control pill
- On long trips move around and stretch frequently and drink plenty of fluids
- Make sure any doctor who treats you knows you have a clotting risk
- If hospitalized and/or immobile for a prolonged period, anticoagulation may be beneficial
- Wear a compression stocking especially on long trips or when your limb is feeling more swollen
- Elevate your limb when you are sitting for long periods