What is deep vein thrombosis (DVT)?

Deep vein thrombosis (deep vayn throm-BO-sis), also known as DVT, is a blood clot that forms in a vein deep in the body, usually in your lower leg or thigh.

What symptoms are common in DVT?

Symptoms may include:

- Swelling in the leg with the clot, including your ankle and foot
- Pain in the leg with the clot—often starts in your calf (like a cramp or charley horse) but can include your ankle and foot
- Warmth in the general area of the clot
- Changes in your skin color (pale, red, or blue)

DVT often occurs without any symptoms.

How did I get DVT?

DVT can happen when your blood is more likely to clot. Reasons can include:

- Keeping still for a long time
- Blood clotting disorder
- Cancer or cancer treatment
- Older age
- Heart failure
- Pacemaker or vein catheter
- Smoking
- Pregnancy or giving birth
- Medicines, like birth control
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Being overweight
- Personal/family history of deep vein clots
- Vein injury
- Surgery and certain medicines given during surgery

You have a higher chance of developing DVT if you’ve had a clot in a vein deep in the body before.
What can happen with DVT?

1. The blood clot in your vein could break away.
2. The bloodstream can carry it to your lungs.
3. Once in your lungs, the clot could block blood flow. This is called a **pulmonary embolism** (PUL-ma-neh-ree EMB-uh-li-zum), or PE.
   - This is a serious, life-threatening condition that can cause damage to your lungs and other organs, or even death.

Warning signs of a blood clot that has traveled to your lung may include:

- Sudden shortness of breath
- Chest pain or discomfort that worsens when you take a deep breath
- Feeling light-headed, dizziness, or fainting
- Rapid pulse
- Sweating
- Cough, even coughing up blood
- Feeling anxious or nervous

Get medical attention right away if you have any warning signs.

How is DVT treated?

Goals for treating DVT are:

- Stopping the blood clot in your vein from getting any bigger
- Keeping the clot from breaking away and traveling to your lungs
- Keeping new clots from forming

Your doctor may give you a medicine, such as a blood thinner, to help lower your blood’s ability to clot, and to stop a clot you already have from getting bigger. Depending on the seriousness of your symptoms, other treatments may include a medicine to help dissolve the clot quickly or a surgical procedure.

Your doctor will determine which treatment option is right for you.

This health information is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace your discussions with a healthcare professional. All decisions regarding patient care must be made with a healthcare professional, who can consider the unique aspects of the patient.