

Blood Clots

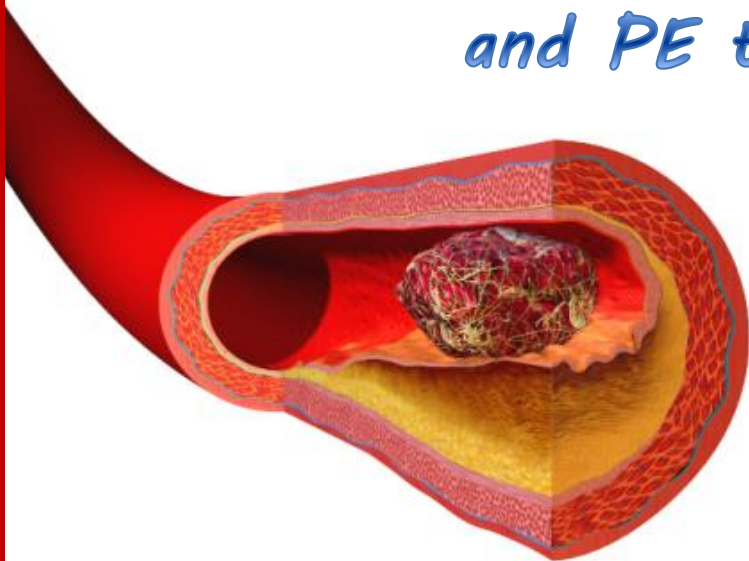
The Facts about DVT & PE



What is a Deep Vein Thrombosis?

- A DVT or Deep Vein Thrombosis is a blood clot in the deep veins, usually in the leg.
- According to the American Heart Association, DVT occurs in about 2 million Americans every year.
- When A DVT breaks loose and travels to the lungs, it is called a Pulmonary Embolus (PE).
- PE's can be immediately fatal and are responsible for more deaths in the U.S. each year than breast cancer and AIDS combined.
- DVT and PE can be prevented and treated with anticoagulant (blood thinning) medications.

*Up to 100,000 deaths occur in the
US each year as a result of DVT
and PE together.*



Know what to look for.
Know what your personal
DVT Risks are. Continue
Reading for more
information.

What are The Symptoms of DVT & PE?

When a blood clot forms, it can either partially or totally block the flow of blood in the vein. Smaller blood clots that partially block blood flow may cause only mild symptoms or none at all. Larger blood clots that block blood flow usually cause:

- Leg Swelling
- Leg Pain – often worse when standing or walking
- Leg Warmth and Redness

If the clot breaks off and travels in the bloodstream, it can cause damage to the lungs. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it is called a pulmonary embolism (PE). A PE often causes shortness of breath, coughing, or chest pain. Sometimes a PE can be mistaken for pneumonia or infection.

What Should I Do If I Think I Have a DVT or PE?

If the lung damage caused by a PE is severe, it can kill people very quickly, even before treatment can be given. For this reason, every effort should be made to prevent a DVT before it happens. If you suspect that you may have a DVT or PE, you should seek medical attention right away.

How Can I Prevent a DVT?

First, you should know your risk for DVT. Go to <http://natfonline.org/patients/risk-assessment-tool/risk-assessment-tool/> to access an online DVT/PE Risk Assessment tool. Some things that anyone can do to help prevent a DVT include:

- Exercise the legs routinely – take a brisk walk every day.
- Maintain a reasonable body weight.
- Avoid sitting with the legs crossed at the knee.
- Avoid sitting or lying in bed for long periods of time.
- Avoid tight-fitting, restrictive clothing.
- Don't smoke.
- Drink plenty of noncaffeinated, nonalcoholic fluids each day so you don't get dehydrated.
- Wear special support stockings if your healthcare provider advises.

Being hospitalized increases DVT risk. Surgery, especially surgery that involves a leg joint or hip, dramatically increases the risk of having a DVT. If you are scheduled for a surgery such as this, your healthcare provider will do a DVT Risk Assessment prior to the surgery. Additionally, if you suddenly develop leg pain or swelling or breathing problems within a week after being in a hospital, you should immediately seek medical advice.

Go to <http://natfonline.org/> for more information.