

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)



What Is Deep Vein Thrombosis?

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot in the veins deep in the leg. It may cause pain and swelling. It is important to treat DVT so the clot does not get worse. It could also move to the lungs and cause serious breathing problems, circulation problems, or even death. DVT can happen:

- If you don't move your legs after an injury
- While in the hospital, when you are in bed for a long time
- After an operation
- During a long airplane trip
- In some people with cancer
- In some women who take birth control pills or hormones
- In people with blood that clots more easily



What Are the Warning Signs of Deep Vein Thrombosis?

In about half of all DVT cases, there may be no symptoms. Some symptoms that can happen are:

- Swelling in the leg, including the ankle and foot
- Pain in the leg; the pain often starts in the calf and can feel like cramping
- Skin that feels warm to the touch
- Changes in skin color (redness)



How Is Deep Vein Thrombosis Diagnosed?

Your doctor will look at your leg. Your doctor may order an ultrasound to see if there's a clot in the veins of the leg. An ultrasound is a painless test that takes a picture of the veins. Other blood tests may be done to check if you are at a higher risk for blood clots.



How Is Deep Vein Thrombosis Treated?

Medicines called blood thinners are given to prevent more clots in the leg and keep a clot from going to the lungs. People with DVT may need to take blood thinners for many months, sometimes longer. Special stockings, called pressure stockings, can help keep the leg from swelling while the clot is being treated.

