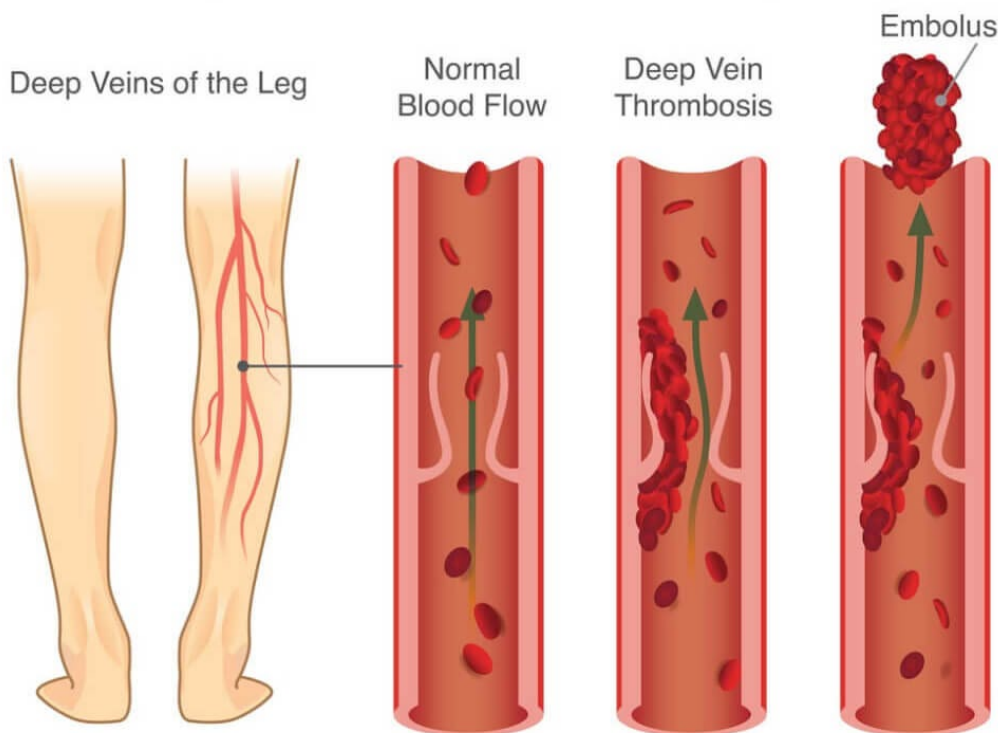


## Deep Vein Thrombosis



### What is a DVT?

DVT is an abbreviation for Deep Vein Thrombosis. A DVT, is a blood clot that forms in one of the deep veins in your body, usually in one of your legs. A blood clot is a clump of blood cells that forms into a solid mass over time. A DVT may be dangerous because it can break off and move through your bloodstream to your lungs, causing a pulmonary embolism, or PE. A PE can block blood flow and cause lung and heart damage or even death.

### How common is it?

DVT occurs in 1-2 people out of every 1000.

### What are the risk factors for developing a DVT?

If you're not very active, you're at risk for a DVT. People who are paralyzed, and anyone who's confined to a bed for any reason, has an increased chance of getting a DVT.

Dehydration can increase your risk of getting a DVT because it makes the blood thicker, and blood tends to clot when it thickens.



Other risk factors for a DVT include:

- heart failure
- active cancer
- chemotherapy
- recent trauma or injury
- birth control medicines or Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- obesity (BMI > 30)
- pregnancy
- traveling more than 4 hours by car, plane, train, or bus without walking around
- genetic disorders.

### What are the symptoms of a DVT?

Most patients with a DVT may not have any obvious symptoms. The most common symptoms include pain, swelling, redness and tenderness in the leg especially the calf muscle.

If a clot breaks off and travels to your lung (PE), you may experience sudden shortness of breath, chest pain, a fast heartbeat, or cough.

### How do you diagnose if you have a DVT or PE?

If you suspect you may have a DVT or PE you need to contact your doctor immediately. Your doctor will be able to confirm if you do have a DVT by doing a blood test called a D-Dimer and getting a doppler ultrasound of your deep veins to look for a clot in the veins. If your doctor thinks you may have a PE he or she will order CT scan of the blood vessels in your lung.

### How do you treat a DVT?

The mainstay of treatment involves starting medication to thin the blood. Various medications are available and your doctor will choose the one that best suits you. Depending on how extensive your DVT is, your doctor may refer you to a Vascular Surgeon to have the clot extracted from your vein.

The treatment with blood thinners usually continues for 6 to 9 months.

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