

VTE

VENOUS THROMBOEMBOLISM

A **Venous Thromboembolism (VTE)** is a clot, which has formed in a vein, usually the deep veins in the leg. It most commonly starts in the calf veins but can extend up into the thigh veins; this condition is known as Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT). It can also occur in deep veins in other parts of the body.

Blood clots are your body's natural response to a cut or break and ensure that wounds or areas of inflammation do not bleed excessively. These are necessary and helpful forms of blood clots that we all need.

Unfortunately, sometimes unwanted large blood clots form within the deep veins (often in the legs, but they can occur elsewhere in the body), parts of these unwanted clots can break free and cause blockages that can become very serious.

The most serious situation is when a clot breaks off and travels to the lungs causing a Pulmonary Embolism (PE).

Why do blood clots form in the veins?

Blood flow through the veins is helped along by movement of the muscles which squeeze the veins. Most clots occur because of three factors:

- Reduced flow in the vein
- Damage to the vein walls
- Changes that result in making the blood sticky and more likely to clot

Common risk factors for thrombosis (blood clots) are:

- Hospitalisation for any reason
- Surgery, especially:
 - Hip & knee replacement
 - Procedures to the pelvis and abdomen
- Severe trauma (eg accident)
- Prolonged / long-term bed rest

- Cancer and some cancer treatments
- Injury to a vein
- Pregnancy and post-partum

- A family history of blood clots
- Oral contraceptive pill
- Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- Obesity
- Long periods of inactivity
- Dehydration
- Smoking

If you have concerns or any of these risk factors apply to you, it is very important that you discuss this with your doctor

DVT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS

A blood clot can occur in anyone without any warning signs or symptoms



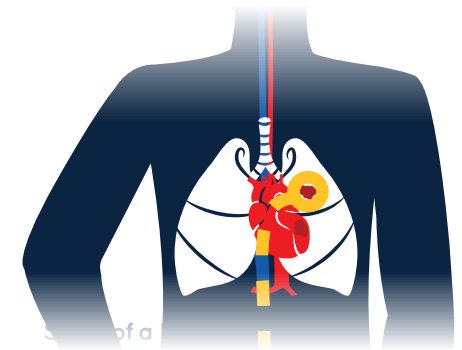
Signs of DVT may include:

- Pain
- Tenderness
- Swelling
- Warmth
- Redness

PE

PULMONARY EMBOLISM

A blood clot can occur in anyone without any warning signs or symptoms



- Rapid breathing
- Chest pain
- Rapid heart rate
- Light headedness or passing out