

THROMBOPHILIA AND PLANNING A PREGNANCY



If you have thrombophilia and you are thinking about getting pregnant, this guide is for you. It explains what thrombophilia is, and how planning ahead can help keep you and your baby safe.

WHAT IS THROMBOPHILIA?

Thrombophilia means your blood is more likely than normal to form clots in a vein. A clot is a lump of blood that has gone hard, like a plug.

A small amount of clotting is normal and healthy – it is how a cut stops bleeding. But with thrombophilia, clots can form inside veins where they are not needed. This can block blood flow and cause harm.

TYPES OF THROMBOPHILIA

There are two main groups:



Inherited thrombophilia – something you were born with, passed down from a parent. Examples include Factor V Leiden, the prothrombin gene change, and protein C, protein S, or antithrombin deficiency.



Acquired thrombophilia – something that develops later in life. The main example is antiphospholipid syndrome (APS), where the immune system makes antibodies that increase clotting.

Your doctor can tell you which type you have, and how much it raises your risk.

SIGNS OF A BLOOD CLOT

get help straight away if you notice:



Pain, swelling, redness, or warmth in one leg



Shortness of breath, or fast breathing



Sudden chest pain



A fast heartbeat



Coughing, especially with blood



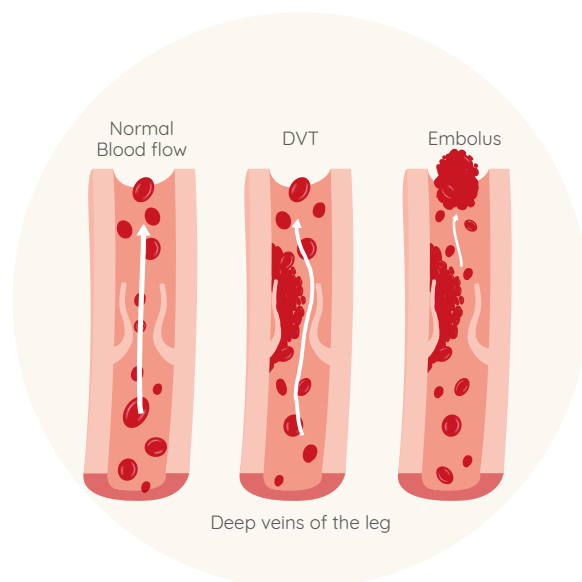
Feeling dizzy or faint or pass out

WHY DOES THIS MATTER FOR PREGNANCY?

Pregnancy naturally makes blood clot more easily. This is the body's normal way of preparing for birth. If you also have thrombophilia, this adds to the risk.

Possible problems include a clot in the leg (deep vein thrombosis, or DVT) or a clot in the lungs (pulmonary embolism, or PE). Some types of severe thrombophilia can also raise the chance of miscarriage, pre-eclampsia, or the baby not growing as well as expected.

Having thrombophilia does not mean these problems will definitely happen. Many women with thrombophilia have straightforward pregnancies, especially with the right planning and support.



PLANNING AHEAD: BEFORE YOU TRY TO GET PREGNANT

It really helps to speak to a doctor or specialist before you start trying for a baby. Here is what this usually involves:

1. A Risk Assessment

Your doctor will ask about your health, your family history, and any past blood clots. This helps them work out your personal level of risk, and what care you may need in pregnancy.

2. A Medicine Review

If you already take a blood-thinning medicine, this is a very important step. Some blood thinners, such as warfarin and DOACs (direct oral anticoagulants), are not safe for a developing baby.

If you take one of these medicines, your doctor will usually plan to switch you to a different medicine called heparin (often low-molecular-weight heparin, or LMWH), as early as possible once you find out you are pregnant. Never stop or change a blood-thinning medicine by yourself – always talk to your doctor first.

3. General Health Steps



Start taking folic acid, as advised for all pregnancies



Stop smoking, as smoking also raises clot risk



Ask about any other health conditions that may need extra care



Try to reach a healthy weight before pregnancy, if you can, since extra weight adds to clot risk



Keep active with regular movement, such as walking

WHAT HAPPENS DURING PREGNANCY?

Once you are pregnant, you will usually be seen by a specialist team who understand thrombophilia. This may include:

- Extra appointments and scans to check on you and the baby
- Daily injections of heparin, if your risk is high enough to need them
- Advice on staying active and avoiding long periods of sitting still

Your care plan will be personal to you. It depends on your type of thrombophilia, your past health, and any other risk factors.



KEY WORDS EXPLAINED

Thrombophilia:

a tendency for blood to clot more easily than normal

Clot:

a lump of blood that has gone hard, blocking flow inside a blood vessel

DVT (deep vein thrombosis):

a clot in a vein, often in the leg

PE (pulmonary embolism):

a clot that has travelled to the lungs

Anticoagulant:

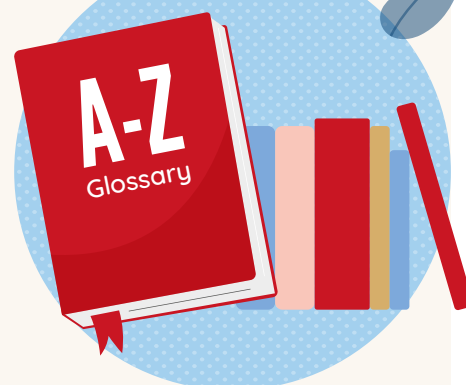
a medicine that helps stop blood from clotting (also called a blood thinner)

LMWH (low-molecular-weight heparin):

an injected blood thinner that is safe in pregnancy

Preconception:

the time before you become pregnant



This guide is for general information only. Always speak to your own doctor or specialist about your personal care and treatment, ideally before you start trying to get pregnant.



Thrombosis UK (www.thrombosisuk.org)

Download our app today! Scan the QR code for more details.



 **Thrombosis UK**
Awareness • Research • Care

Reg Charity No: 1090540