

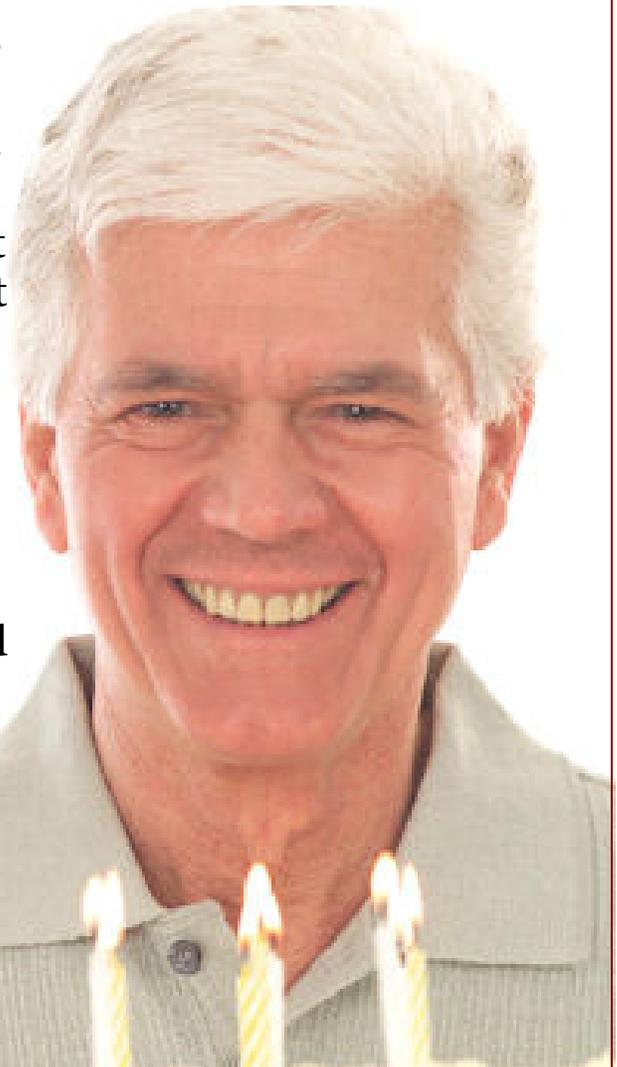


Blood Clots

Get the Facts About DVT & PE
www.clotcare.com

What is Deep Vein Thrombosis?

- * DVT stands for deep vein thrombosis. A DVT 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).
- * PEs can be immediately fatal and are responsible for more deaths in the U.S. each year than breast cancer and AIDS combined. (Gerotziafas, et. al. Curr Opin Pulm Med. 2004;10:356-65.)
- * DVT and PE can be prevented and treated with anticoagulant medications.



Up to 300,000 DVT-related deaths occur in the US each year. Know the signs and symptoms and your personal DVT risk. See reverse side for more info.

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 is 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 www.ClotCare.com to get a copy of the DVT Coalition's DVT risk assessment tool. Some things that anybody can do to help prevent a DVT include:

- exercise the legs regularly — 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

Being hospitalized increases DVT risk. Surgery, especially surgery that involves a leg joint or hip, dramatically increases the risk of having a DVT. Therefore, at the time of admission to a hospital, a health care practitioner should do a careful DVT risk assessment and should discuss various methods that can be used to keep the risk of DVT as low as possible. This may include anticoagulant medicines that make it more difficult for the body to form a blood clot. In some cases, an intermittent compression device that automatically squeezes the feet and lower legs is used to increase the blood flow in the legs.

Although the risk of developing a DVT during long-distance travel is quite low, it is a good idea to exercise the legs at least once every hour during a long trip. Regular exercise at least once every hour means taking regular breaks if driving, or walking the aisle if traveling by train, bus, or airplane. Travelers who are at risk of developing a DVT may wish to wear graduated compression stockings.

People who have had a DVT in the past or have multiple DVT risk factors should seek medical advice before traveling long-distance. Some doctors recommend taking a dose of aspirin or anticoagulant medicine before traveling, but this approach is not suitable for everyone, and there are potential side-effects.

Anyone who suddenly develops leg pain or swelling or breathing problems within a week after being in a hospital or taking a long-distance trip should immediately seek medical advice.

Go to www.clotcare.com for more information