



What You Need to Know After **Deep Vein Thrombosis or Pulmonary Embolism**

The content provided here is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease, or to replace professional medical advice given by your doctor. Please talk with your doctor about any questions or concerns you may have about your condition.



AFTER DVT OR PE

Discovering that you have deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE) can be scary and overwhelming. The good news is that your healthcare team has been providing treatment to help your body heal and to prevent another blood clot from forming. In this brochure you will learn more about DVT and PE, and things you can do to take care of yourself after DVT or PE.



What are DVT and PE?

Deep vein thrombosis, or DVT, is a blood clot that forms in a deep vein in the body, usually in the leg.

If a clot from your deep vein breaks off and travels through your bloodstream to an artery in your lungs, it can partially or completely block blood flow. This is called pulmonary embolism, or PE. This is a serious condition that can cause damage to your lungs and other organs, and sometimes can cause death.

If you've been diagnosed with DVT or PE, you've probably already started treatment to help break up the blood clot and to prevent another clot from forming.

What causes DVT and PE?

You may be wondering what caused your DVT or PE. There are a few common factors that may contribute to the development of DVT.

- A blood clot may form in your veins if your vein has been damaged, such as during surgery or a serious injury
- Lack of movement can also cause a blood clot, which may happen after surgery, if you are sick and in bed for a long time, or when you're traveling on a long trip in the car or on a plane
- Some people may have health conditions or may take medicines that increase their risk of blood clots

However, many other cases of DVT have no known cause.

What are the symptoms of DVT and PE?

Because you had DVT or PE, you are at risk for another one. That's why it's important to follow your doctor's instructions for treatment, and become familiar with the signs and symptoms of DVT and PE.

Signs and symptoms of DVT include redness, swelling, warmth, and pain in the leg. Many times DVT is "silent," meaning there aren't noticeable symptoms.

It's also possible to have PE and not have any symptoms. Here are some signs of PE that you should watch for:

- **Shortness of breath**
- **Rapid pulse**
- **Sweating**
- **A feeling of anxiety**
- **Chest pains that worsen with deep breath**
- **Coughing up blood**
- **Lightheadedness**

If you notice any of the symptoms of DVT or PE, call your doctor right away. **If your doctor is not available, go to the emergency room.**

Risk of DVT or PE happening again*

After you have had one DVT or PE, you may still be at risk of having another event.

- For individuals who had a DVT or PE caused by a recent surgery, about 1% have another event within 1 year; 3% have another event within 5 years.
- If the first DVT or PE was caused by a nonsurgical event, for example pregnancy, leg injury, or a long flight, about 5% have another event within 1 year; 15% have another event within 5 years.
- When the cause of the first DVT or PE is unknown, about 10% have another event within 1 year; 30% have another event within 5 years.

*In patients with upper-leg DVT or PE after stopping treatment. Your individual risk may differ, so be sure to talk to your doctor.



How are DVT and PE treated?

Anticoagulants, a type of blood thinner medicine, are one of the most common treatments for DVT. These medicines thin your blood to help prevent clots from forming. There are different kinds of blood thinner medicines. Some can be taken as a pill, and others have to be injected with a needle. Your doctor decided which type of medicine is best for you, and determined how long you need to take the medicine. With some blood thinners, you may need to have regular blood tests to make sure you're taking the right amount of medicine.

Another treatment for DVT is compression stockings. The stockings put pressure on your legs, which can help keep blood from pooling and clotting.

Other medicines that help dissolve blood clots or that change the blood clotting process in your body may also help treat DVT. Again, your doctor will decide what type of treatment is best for you.

Can another DVT or PE be prevented?

After you have been diagnosed with DVT or PE, there are some things you can do to help prevent another clot from forming. It's important to follow your doctor's directions for how to take your medicines, and any other lifestyle changes he or she may suggest. Here are some things you can do:

- **Take your blood thinner medicines as prescribed by your doctor.**
- **Visit your doctor for regular checkups.**
- **Follow up with your doctor for tests and other treatments as directed.**
- **Follow your doctor's directions for when it's okay to get up and move around after surgery or a long sickness.**
- **Move your legs and feet to help improve blood flow during long trips.**

Medicine tips

Taking your medicines as prescribed by your doctor is very important. Below are some medicine tips you may find helpful:

- Keep your medicine in a place where you'll be sure to see it, such as next to your coffee cup or with your place settings for the kitchen table.
- Refill your medicine at least 7 days before you run out. It's important that you don't miss a dose.
 - Talk to your doctor to see if your medicine can be filled by mail-order pharmacy, which may provide a 90-day supply of your medicine.
 - You'll find a blank calendar at the end of this brochure that you can use to keep track of refill dates and follow-up appointments.
- Read the patient guide that comes with your medicine.
- Keep an updated list of the medicines you take. The list should include prescription and over-the-counter (nonprescription) medicines, as well as herbal supplements and vitamins. You'll find a blank medicine tracker at the end of this brochure.
- Tell all of your doctors and your dentist about the medications you are taking.



Talk to your doctor or other members of your healthcare team:

- ☑ If you have any signs or symptoms of DVT or PE
- ☑ If you have any questions about your medicines or your condition
- ☑ If you think you are experiencing side effects
- ☑ Before you take any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, herbal supplements, or vitamins.
They can tell you if the new medicines can be taken with your current medicines
- ☑ To learn if there are any special instructions for storing your medicines
- ☑ If you are worried about how much your medicines cost, because there may be programs available to help you pay for them



My Health Tracker: Follow-up Calendar

Use this calendar to keep track of your follow-up doctor's appointments, changes in your medicine schedule, when you need to request medicine refills, etc. Before you write in the month and days, you may want to make copies of the blank calendar to use again in the future.

Month: _____

[illegible]

My Health Tracker: Medicine List

Use this chart to keep track of the medicines you take and your medicine schedule. Be sure to include prescription and over-the-counter (nonprescription) medicines, as well as vitamins and herbal supplements. Take this list with you to your doctor's appointments. You may want to make copies of the blank tracker to use again in the future.

Name of medicine	Dose/number of pills	When is it taken? (check all that apply)	Take with food (circle one)	What is it for?	Prescribing doctor	What does it look like?
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Medicines I'm allergic to: _____