Pulmonary Embolism and Deep Vein Thrombosis

A blood clot is when your blood changes from a liquid to a solid. Blood clots stop us from bleeding and help us heal. A blood clot is good because it stops bleeding when you get a cut or hurt yourself. This is usually a good thing, but sometimes it isn't good.

A **deep vein thrombosis (DVT)** is a clot that forms in one of the big vessels in the arm, leg or abdomen. The big vessels are veins (veins return blood back to the heart) or arteries (pumps blood to the body from the heart).

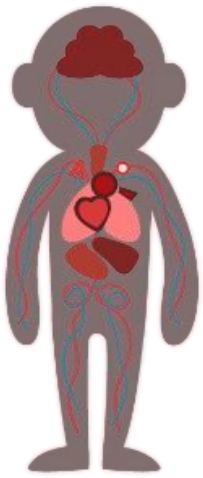
The symptoms are pain, swelling, redness that cannot be explained by other injuries.
These clots may cause pain and swelling that may last for several months after the initial clot.

In some cases, a blood clot may move to the lung or a clot may form in the arteries in the lung. This is called a pulmonary embolism.
Pulmonary Embolism is a clot in the lung. This is a serious event where patients experience shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, cough, air hunger or pain with breathing.

Please note: These symptoms may also persist for a while after the initial blood clot.

Arteries and veins are like hoses that carry blood throughout your body. Arteries pump blood to your body.

Veins bring the blood back to your heart and lungs to pump through your body again.



Go to www.kidclot.com to learn more.

What causes a DVT?

There are many causes of DVT or PE. Sometimes, the reason is never known.
Risk factors that can cause DVT and PE may be:

- Injury to blood vessels from surgery, central lines (big IVs), broken bones, or accidents
- Hormone therapy
- Infection
- Family history or genetics
- Immobility from an injury, air travel for over 6 hours, being in bed for multiple days, dehydration and many others, some are unknown.

Treatment of a DVT

Anticoagulants are a class of medications more commonly known as “blood thinners” and can be used to treat DVTs. There are many types of anticoagulants.
Your blood clot specialist will discuss what options are available and best for your specific needs.

- Treatment of a DVT and PE may be short-term or long-term, depending on your symptoms and risk of developing another clot.
- Your blood clot specialist will decide how long to take a blood thinner. It is often three months or longer.
- Even while receiving treatment, these clots may cause swelling, pain, and difficulty breathing that can persist for months after the initial clot. The clot may go away over time or may form a vessel scar.

What Should I Know About Taking A Blood Thinner?

A blood thinner prevents your blood clot from getting bigger. Your body will try to help the clot dissolve.
While taking a blood thinner, do not take medications such as:

- Excedrin®
- Naproxen (Aleve®)
- Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®, Midol®, Pamprin HB®)

Events: bleeding or clotting events are important to deciding your warfarin dose and should be discussed with your anticoagulation team.
If you have **any planned surgery**, let your anticoagulation team know at least one week before the scheduled date.

Events: Possible Side Effects

- Mild Bleeding
- Nosebleeds - If your nose starts bleeding, pinch the nose, and hold it tightly for **10** minutes without stopping. If still bleeding, squeeze and hold for another 10 minutes. If still bleeding, seek medical attention immediately.
- Easy bruising
- Bleeding after a cut that takes a little longer to stop.
- Bleeding from the gums may be reduced by using a soft toothbrush
- Menstrual bleeding that is heavier than normal

Major Bleeding – Seek medical attention immediately.

- Red, pink or coffee-coloured urine
- Red or black bowel movements
- Coughing or vomiting up blood
- A serious fall or hit to the head.
- A severe headache with nausea or vomiting
- Any bleeding that won't stop with pressure application.
- Unusual bruising for unknown reasons that grow darker or spread.

Safety

Exercise is essential to staying healthy. Continue your regular exercise but remember that when you take a blood thinner, your risk of bleeding with injury is higher.

- ✓ Be sure to wear appropriate protective gear and receive proper training with sports (i.e. helmet with biking)
- ✓ Avoid sports where injuries or falls are common (i.e. competitive contact sports)
- ✓ You may have your immunizations and flu shots while on a blood thinner. Apply pressure to the immunization site for 10 minutes after your immunization to prevent bleeding.

What is Post-Thrombotic Syndrome (PTS)?

Most children who develop blood clots recover without long-term problems. In 4 of every 10 children, the blood clot will go away. If it does not go away, it will become a scar in your vein, like a bump on the road, and blood will flow around it. Your body develops other veins allowing blood to flow around the blocked area. This way, blood continues to flow to all parts of your body to keep it healthy.

Post-thrombotic Syndrome (PTS) occurs when the valves within your veins or arteries are damaged from the clot or from having a clot that does not go away.

What Does PTS Feel Like?

PTS is having continued symptoms of pain, swelling and changes in skin colour, or the ability to see veins just under or through the skin. PTS may occur soon after the clot first occurs or many years after the initial clot. 2-3 of 10 children will develop PTS.

PST is not dangerous to your health, but….

Compression knee-high socks help manage the symptoms. They improve circulation, help recovery, reduce soreness, and help prevent swelling. They may be purchased online or in sports stores. There are also very tight special compression garments that require a prescription.

If you have pain or swelling in your body that bothers you in the area where your clot was, call your doctor who helped you treat your blood clot and tell them.