



# Deep vein thrombosis

## What is it?

Deep vein thrombosis is a type of blood clot that forms in a deep vein (not a vein on the surface of the skin). Deep vein thrombosis is usually seen in the leg but may form in any deep vein.

The main danger is that the clot may move and lodge in the lung. This is called a pulmonary embolism and is a serious and potentially life-threatening complication.

## What will my GP do now?

Your GP will develop a treatment plan, depending on the location and size of the clot. Your GP may discuss:

- Having a regular ultrasound for a few weeks to continue observing the clot
- Medications that help thin your blood and prevent clots from forming
- Wearing compression stockings

If your condition is complicated or severe, your GP will refer you to a specialist or straight to your local hospital emergency department.

The hospital can give medications straight into a vein (intravenously or also called IV) so they can have an immediate effect. The doctors at the hospital may also do other tests to help manage your condition and discuss other treatments, such as surgery. You might be offered a Hospital in the Home service.

## What will my GP do in the future?

Depending on the size and position of the clot, your treatment may continue for up to three months. Some people need treatment for longer. Your GP will want to check how your treatment is going, and they may:

- Do further blood tests to find out what caused the clot
- Recommend an ultrasound of the clot
- Refer you to a specialist if necessary

As you finish your treatment your GP may discuss ways to help prevent clots in the future, including:

- Regular exercise
- Changes to your diet and weight loss
- Quitting smoking

## What can I do?

Take any medications your GP prescribes, and follow your GP's instructions. Wear compression stockings, when and if directed. When you have deep vein thrombosis, staying active is important.

Your GP may recommend certain types of physical activity to suit your circumstances. You can also ask to see a physiotherapist or exercise physiologist who can develop an exercise plan for you. Follow any dietary changes recommended by your GP.

If you're planning to fly, speak to your GP about the risks involved and what precautions you should take.

## When should I call an ambulance?



Call Triple 0 (000) immediately if you become short of breath, have pain in your chest, have a rapid pulse, feel dizzy or faint, or cough up blood

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## What supports are available?

### Hospital in the Home

Hospital in the Home (also known as 'HITH' or 'Hospital at Home') lets patients with certain medical conditions have hospital-level care at home.

Hospital in the Home services can be delivered wherever you live: in your own home, in an assisted living facility or in a residential care facility. Highly trained nurses provide your care under the direction of your GP.

If you are eligible for Hospital in the Home, you can be discharged earlier from hospital or can avoid hospital completely. Recovering at home rather than in hospital reduces your risk of getting infections. Being in a familiar place may also help your feeling of wellbeing and speed your recovery.

## What questions could I ask my doctor?

- How long will I have to be on blood thinners?
- What is the cause of my DVT?
- Is flying dangerous?
- Is there any medication I should avoid?
- What foods should I avoid?



## Where can I learn more?

If you'd like to learn more about deep vein thrombosis, the following resources can help:

- **Better Health Channel** – deep vein thrombosis: [betterhealth.vic.gov.au](https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au)
- **healthdirect** – deep vein thrombosis: [healthdirect.gov.au](https://healthdirect.gov.au)
- **MyDr** – deep vein thrombosis and flying: [mydr.com.au](https://mydr.com.au)

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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