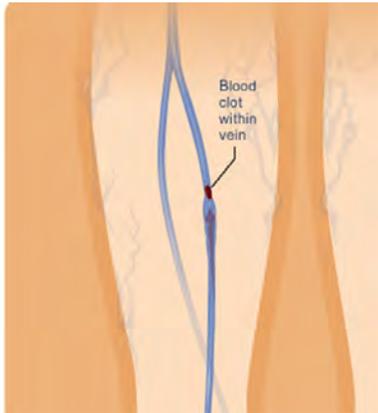


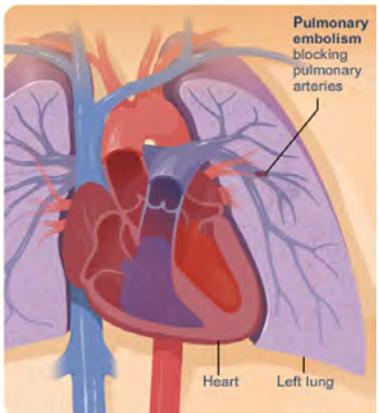


## What is a blood clot?

There are 2 groups of blood clots, **deep vein thrombosis (DVT)** and **pulmonary embolism (PE)**.



**Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)** is when blood clots in the veins of the legs. It can partially or fully block the vein. This affects blood flow from the leg to the heart. Blood will pool in the legs causing swelling, (edema).



**Pulmonary embolism (PE)** is when a clot that is in the leg breaks off from the wall of the vein and travels to the lung. The clot can lodge in the lungs, which may make your lungs not work properly. It can cause severe damage and is a very serious condition.

## Other Information

Not every person is a good candidate for treatment to prevent blood clots. **Unless your doctor says otherwise, blood thinning medications should not be taken if you have any of the following conditions:**

- High risk of bleeding.
- Severe kidney problems.
- Epidural Catheter - a catheter that a person may have when in the hospital.
- Low platelet count.
- Heparin induced low platelet count - means you had a reaction to heparin that caused more clots instead of less.

Unless your doctor says otherwise, **you should not use** compression therapy (medical stockings) if you have any of the following conditions:

- Coronary artery disease.
- Absent peripheral pulse (causes reduced blood flow to your limbs).
- Deformed legs.
- Skin infection/condition, gangrene.
- Fluid build up in lungs or legs due to congestive heart failure.
- Skin graft within the past 6 months.

If you have any of the following:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain

See your doctor or go to the nearest emergency room right away.

## Preventing blood clots

There are a few different ways to prevent blood clots from happening.

- Blood thinner medication. This decreases the ability of the blood to clot, therefore decreasing the chance of clots forming.
- The doctor will know what medication is right for each person depending on their condition.
- If medication isn't the right choice, the doctor may also suggest compression therapy (medical stockings).
- Do Not use compression stockings unless prescribed by a doctor or nurse practitioner and measured and made to fit you.
  - The most common type of compression therapy is called "Compression Stockings", which are special stockings that fit very tightly.
  - The stockings must be tight to increase the blood flow in your legs and decrease the chance of the blood to pool in your legs and clot.
  - You must wear the stockings as much as possible or they will not help prevent clots.

## How do blood clots form?

There are 3 reasons why clots form:

### (1) Increased chances of the blood clotting.

If the blood clots more easily than normal then it will be more likely to come together and form on the wall of the vein.

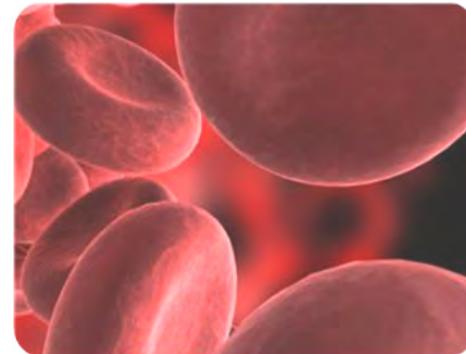
### (2) Decreased blood flow/slower rate.

If the blood doesn't move and stays for a long time in the leg, the blood is more likely to clot.

### (3) Damage to the vein walls.

Damage to the wall of the veins means that the blood needs to fix it. So the blood will form a clot to fix the damage.

Any of these 3 conditions means that a person is more likely to develop a blood clot.



## Symptoms of a blood clot

### Symptoms of clots in the legs (DVT):

- Pain in your legs.
- Swelling in your legs.
- Red and warm legs.



Sometimes there are no symptoms.

### Symptoms of clots in the lungs (PE):

- Shortness of breath.
- Chest pain.
- Cough (may cough up blood).
- Fast heart rate.
- Breathing faster.



Clots in the lung can cause death.

## Will I develop a blood clot?

If you are having general major surgery, you are at increased risk of developing clots. **Talk to your doctor** about things you can do to keep this from happening.

If you have any of the following risk factors, **talk to your doctor** about your risks of developing clots:

- Blood surgery
- Extensive burns.
- Congestive heart failure.
- Respiratory disease.
- Bed rest/immobility.
- Spinal cord injury.
- History of blood clots.
- Stroke.
- Active cancer/receiving cancer treatment.
- Inflammatory bowel disease.
- Age greater than 70.
- Obesity.

More... **Talk to your doctor** for a full list of risk factors.