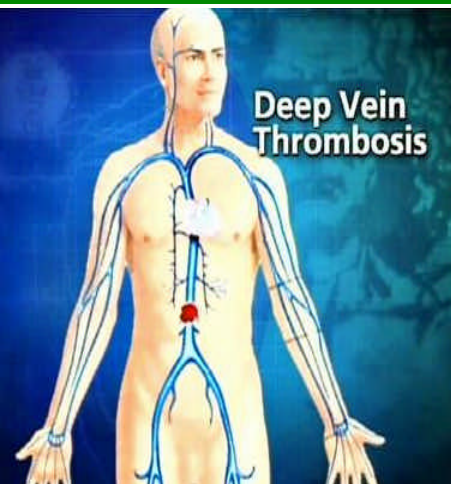


Deep Vein Thrombosis - DVT



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Deep Vein Thrombosis

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) is the formation of a blood clot in a deep vein, commonly in the leg. The clots are dangerous, as they could break free, and travel through the veins to the lungs and block blood flow. The clot forms due to a decreased rate of blood flow to the legs following an extended period of time sitting down, such as on long flights. The following criteria increase the risk of DVT:

- Age: over 40
- Previous thrombosis condition
- Certain hematological disorders
- Cancer
- Congestive heart failure
- Recent surgery (especially in the lower limbs)
- Pregnancy
- Post-thrombosis Syndrome
- Chronic venous insufficiency
- The pill or hormone replacement therapy
- Dehydration

There are also risk factors specific to air travel -

- Immobility
- Cramped position
- Dehydration due to the excessive use of alcohol
- Compression of the popliteal vein by the edge of the seat
- Seated posture (especially when sleeping)

D.V.T. can occur without symptoms, but typically the following symptoms become evident:

- The affected area is painful, swollen, red and warm and possibly displaying swollen veins on the surface around the affected area



- Cramping or tenderness in one lower leg (athletes often mistake this for cramping)
- A bruise or swelling behind the knee
- Shortness of breath
- Rapid breathing
- Cramp in your side
- Chest pain
- Fever
- Coughing up blood
- Fainting (this is often the first sign in older travelers)

How to Reduce the Risk of DVT

- To keep the back of your thighs off the edge of the seat, rest your feet on your hand luggage, or footrest
- Move around the aircraft as much as possible
- Do “air aerobics” or calisthenics (most airlines offer in-seat exercise routines to help reduce swelling and cramping)
- Avoid dehydration (and alcohol)
- Wear elastic flight socks or stockings (particularly important for varicose vein sufferers)
- DVT can also occur after you have departed the plane, therefore, take a walk for one hour immediately after the flight

Treatment of DVT

Blood thinners (anticoagulants) such as heparin and warfarin are generally prescribed for 3 months to prevent existing clots from growing.

But ultimately, prevention is better than any cure!



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