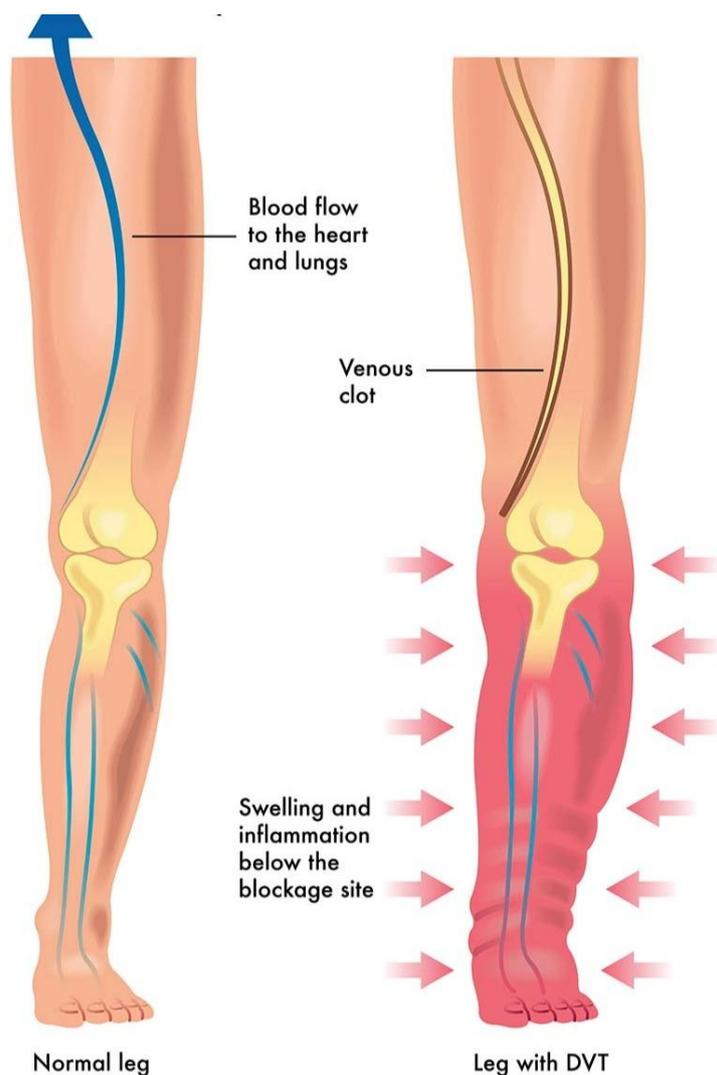


Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)



What is Deep Vein Thrombosis?

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) is a condition where a blood clot forms in a deep vein, most commonly in the leg. It usually affects the calf or thigh but can also occur in other parts of the body.

DVT is a **serious condition** because the clot can sometimes travel to the lungs, causing a **pulmonary embolism (PE)**, which requires urgent medical treatment.

Common symptoms

Symptoms can vary and some people may have no symptoms. Common signs include:

- Swelling in one leg (rarely both legs)
- Pain or tenderness, often in the calf or thigh
- Warmth in the affected area
- Red or discoloured skin
- Pain that may worsen when standing or walking

Symptoms often develop gradually but can occur suddenly.

What causes DVT?

DVT develops when blood flow slows or becomes abnormal. Risk factors include:

- Prolonged immobility (long journeys, bed rest, hospital stays)
- Recent surgery or injury, especially to the legs or hips
- Pregnancy and the post-natal period
- Use of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or oral contraceptive pill
- Cancer or cancer treatment
- Obesity
- Smoking
- Increasing age
- Previous history of DVT or clotting disorders

How is DVT diagnosed?

Diagnosis may involve:

- Assessment of symptoms and risk factors
- Blood tests (such as a D-dimer)
- Ultrasound scan of the leg

Prompt assessment is important if DVT is suspected.

Treatment

DVT is treated with **blood-thinning medication (anticoagulants)** to prevent the clot from growing and reduce the risk of further clots. Treatment may include:

- Tablets or injections
- Regular blood tests or monitoring (depending on medication)
- Compression stockings (in some cases)

Treatment duration varies and may last from several months to long-term management.

Self-management and prevention

To reduce the risk of DVT:

- Keep active and avoid long periods of immobility
- Perform regular leg movements during long journeys
- Stay well hydrated
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Stop smoking
- Follow medical advice after surgery or illness

If you have had a DVT, follow your healthcare professional's advice regarding activity and medication.

When to seek urgent medical help

Seek **immediate medical attention (call 999 or attend A&E)** if you experience:

- Sudden shortness of breath
- Chest pain, especially when breathing in
- Coughing up blood
- Sudden collapse or feeling faint

These may be signs of a pulmonary embolism.

When should I seek medical advice?

Contact your GP or NHS 111 urgently if:

- You develop swelling, pain, or redness in one leg
- Symptoms worsen or do not improve
- You are concerned about side effects of medication

Key messages

- DVT is a serious but treatable condition
- Early diagnosis and treatment reduce complications
- Keep active and manage risk factors where possible
- Seek urgent help if symptoms of pulmonary embolism occur

If you have concerns or questions, please speak to your healthcare professional.