

DVT

Deep Vein Thrombosis

Basics

- DVT is the development of clots (thrombi) in the deep veins of the extremities (most commonly legs)

Symptoms

- Pain and tenderness of the affected extremity
- Edema (swelling), warmth, and redness of the skin over the area of thrombosis

Risk factors

- Age (>60y.)
- Prolonged immobilization (>3 days) or recent hospitalization
- Recent travel (within 2 wk, lasting >2h)
- Other medical conditions such as cancer, congestive heart failure, kidney or blood disorders
- Surgery, trauma, or fracture to pelvis or lower extremities



Prevention strategies

- Maintain a healthy weight and do not smoke, as obesity and smoking are associated with an increased risk of DVT.
- Risk is also increased with certain medications (e.g., birth control pills) and during pregnancy and is highest during the postpartum period.
- Stay physically active, especially post-surgery, as immobility promotes blood stasis, increasing the risk of clotting. When traveling long distances, ambulate frequently, exercise calf muscles to improve blood flow, and consider elastic compression stockings.
- The incidence of DVT increases with age in both sexes. Most small clots resolve spontaneously without complication. Untreated larger clots may lead to pulmonary emboli and medical emergencies.