

# KNOW HOW



COALITION  
TO PREVENT  
DEEP-VEIN  
THROMBOSIS

to help protect  
against DVT

# KNOW WHAT

## **DVT blood clots form inside a deep vein**

usually in the lower limbs. They're often the result of recent surgeries of certain types, prolonged hospital stays, or extended periods of restricted mobility when recuperating from illness or injury.

## **A PE is a complication of DVT that can be fatal**

A pulmonary embolism (PE) is a common complication of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) blood clots. A PE can occur when a blood clot breaks loose and moves into the lungs, blocking blood flow and creating a life-threatening situation. It can be difficult to detect because there may be no symptoms. This is why it is so important to know if you're at risk for DVT and that you are treated with the appropriate therapy as soon as possible.

## **Complications from DVT cause more deaths every year in the U.S. than breast cancer and AIDS combined**

Up to 2 million Americans suffer from DVT each year and approximately 300,000 of them die from its complications. DVT-related PE is the most common cause of preventable hospital death.



**DVT**  
**deep vein thrombosis**

# KNOW WHEN

## With certain medical conditions and after certain surgical procedures

your risk of developing DVT blood clots may increase. If you are hospitalized or are off your feet for extended periods of time due to illness, injury, surgery, or recuperation, your risk of DVT may be higher.

## Risks of developing DVT increase with

- **Heart failure**—Depending on the severity, congestive heart failure (CHF) may nearly triple the risk of DVT blood clots
- **Acute infection**—Surgical site infection increases the risk of developing DVT blood clots
- **Surgery**—Blood vessel damage may occur during some surgeries, such as abdominal surgery and hip- or knee-replacement surgery, and may initiate clotting
- **Cancer therapy**—In patients with malignant cancer, DVT is a common complication and the second-leading cause of death

## Other factors that can contribute to increased DVT risk

- Restricted mobility
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Varicose veins
- Obesity
- Intensive care admission
- Prior history of a DVT blood clot
- Smoking
- Age over 40 years

*This is a partial list of risk factors. Each factor alone does not necessarily increase your risk. Learn more about your risk of developing a DVT blood clot by talking to the key healthcare professionals managing your care.*

**Visit [www.preventdvt.org](http://www.preventdvt.org) to assess your risk**

**To learn more about your risk of developing**

# KNOW WHERE

## **DVT blood clots are most likely to occur any place your movement is restricted**

for extended periods of time due to acute illness or surgery. You may be in a hospital, a long-term care facility, or a rehabilitation center. These are the places your mobility can be restricted for extended periods of time and where you may be at an increased risk for developing DVT.

DVT may be hard to diagnose. Many people experience no symptoms at all. However, in some people, there may be noticeable signs and symptoms that should be reported to a healthcare professional right away.

Left untreated and undiagnosed, DVT blood clots may lead to PE and other complications.

### **Warning signs of DVT**

- Pain, tenderness, or swelling of the leg
- Discoloration or redness
- Skin that is warm to the touch

### **Warning signs of PE**

- Shortness of breath
- Anxiety or nervousness
- Rapid pulse
- Excessive sweating
- Sharp chest pain
- Cough that may produce a bloody discharge
- Very low blood pressure
- Fainting

In the United States, PE is the leading cause of preventable death in hospitals. If you experience any of the above symptoms, whether in the hospital or at home, seek medical attention immediately.

# KNOW WHO

## Ask your key healthcare professionals about DVT risk

Be specific when talking to your doctor about the risks of developing DVT. Don't hesitate to speak with all of the specialists making treatment decisions about your health, particularly for:

- Congestive heart failure
- Acute infection
- Knee-replacement surgery
- Hip-replacement surgery
- Certain types of cancer
- Abdominal surgery

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## Talking to your doctor may help reduce your risk of developing DVT blood clots

Your physician is your best resource. If you are planning certain surgeries—such as abdominal surgery, or hip- or knee-replacement surgery—or you will be off your feet for an extended period of time due to acute illness or hospitalization, your doctor may decide to help reduce your risk of developing DVT blood clots.

# “THE GOOD NEWS is that DVT and PE are preventable and treatable.”

— Rear Admiral Steven K. Galson, M.D., M.P.H.  
Acting Surgeon General

The Coalition to Prevent Deep-Vein Thrombosis is a group of organizations united to raise awareness of this serious medical condition among consumers, healthcare professionals, policy makers, and public health leaders. The Coalition's mission is to reduce the immediate and long-term dangers of DVT and PE, which together comprise one of the nation's leading causes of death.

Coalition spokesperson Melanie Bloom is the widow of NBC News Correspondent David Bloom who lost his life due to complications from DVT while reporting on the war in Iraq. Melanie Bloom is the national voice of DVT who shares her story in hope to raise awareness and educate others about reducing their risk of DVT.

For more information about the Coalition to Prevent Deep-Vein Thrombosis, visit our website at [www.preventdvt.org](http://www.preventdvt.org).

You can also access our online risk assessment tool and sign up to receive announcements by clicking on *For Patients & Caregivers* from the home page.

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