



DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS : WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

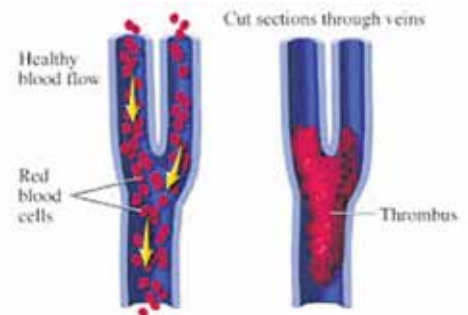
What is DVT : DVT is a condition when thrombus (blood clot) forms and blocks the veins of deep venous system of the body. Blood clots most often in leg and thigh veins, and less often in arm or pelvic veins. These clots increase complications when they migrate to lungs through the blood stream and block the blood flow in lungs which is known pulmonary circulation. It is a medical condition affecting larger population ALL OVER THE WORLD with approximately 80-100 persons per 100000 population. Though it is less prevalent in Asian population, with rising trends of surgeries like knee and hip replacement more cases are detected in last few years in Asian population also.

Causative factors for DVT : Many factors that cause formation of blood clot in veins can cause DVT.

- Slowed circulation which can happen when you are not active for long periods of time.
- Abnormal clotting problems, which make the blood clot too easily or too quickly.
- Injury to the blood vessels.

Risk factors for DVT : Many things increase risk for development of DVT. They include

- Age more than 50 yrs.
- Being over weight
- Long term bed rest such as after major surgery, injury or illness



- Sitting for long time in same position especially travelling for long distance
- Leg paralysis
- Inherited blood clotting problems
- Cancer and its treatment
- Pregnancy or after caesarean
- Use of hormonal therapy or birth control pills
- Smoking
- Family history

Symptoms : Many a times DVT does not show symptoms but in some cases may have minor symptoms like:

- Swelling of limbs
- Pain and tenderness in calf and thigh. It increases after activity like walking and decreases after rest.
- Warmth and redness

Sometimes symptoms of pulmonary embolism may indicate that the patient has DVT. They are



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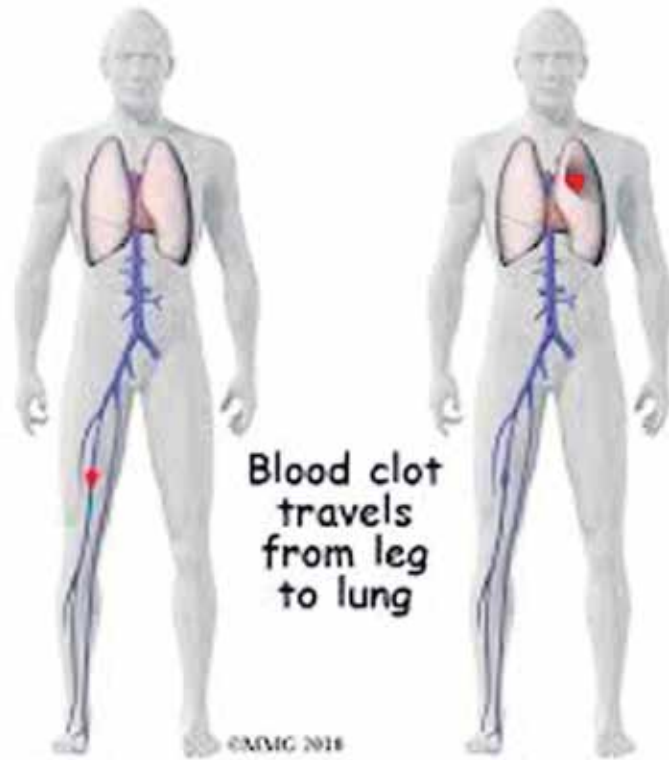
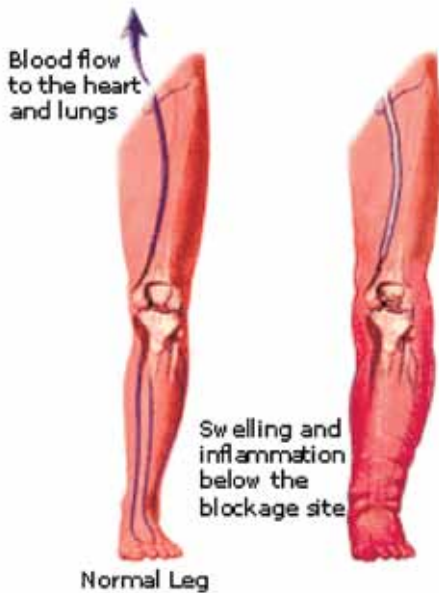
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- Sudden shortness of breathe
- Chest pain
- Cough that may bring up blood
- Fainting

Examination and tests : when you seek a doctor for such a condition tell him details about your complains and the risk factors mentioned earlier. Tell him details of your past medical history and the drugs you are taking for other conditions. After examining you, the doctor will decide to go for some of the investigations to confirm the diagnosis.

- Venous Doppler : it is the main test which creates a picture of the flow of blood through veins. Periodical Doppler may help to determine the progression or regression of DVT.



individual. For life threatening conditions like pulmonary embolism when clot lysis needs to be done urgently, thrombolytic therapy may be given in the hospital.

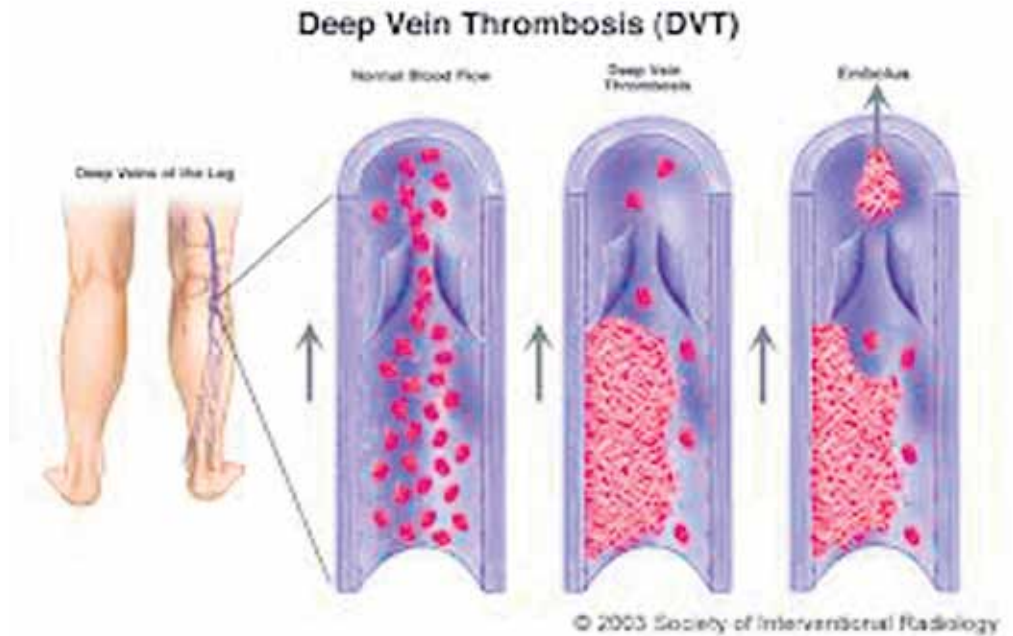
Preventions is better than cure : Some of the preventive actions may help to remain free from DVT like

- Taking anticoagulations to prevent a blood clot that can form after orthopaedic surgeries.
- Exercising your lower leg muscles to improve circulation in your leg.
- Getting up out of the bed as soon as possible after an illness or surgery.
- Using compression stockings to help prevent DVT if you are at an increased risk.

Medications : They are used to prevent formation of clots and prevent existing clots from getting larger. These medications are used for 6 to 12 months depending of the extent of a blockage and speed of recanalization of the blocked veins. These medications are given by oral, intravenous or subcutaneous route. You will have to carry out test like PT with INR every monthly to monitor extent of anticoagulation and change of the dosage if needed.

- OTHER TESTS like d Dimer test or Venographic study may add more to the diagnosis. For pulmonary embolism, CT pulmonary angiography is the gold standard test for diagnosis.
- Other tests for abnormality of clotting factors are useful to identify inherited clotting problems. Test like APTT and PT with INR are useful if a patient is on anticoagulation medication.

Treatment of DVT : It is treated with medications called as anticoagulants or blood thinners to coagulation prevent blood clotting by increasing the time it takes to a clot to form in body. Duration of the therapy varies form 6 to 12 months depending of the extent of thrombosis and other risk factor of the



Medicines of choice :

- Heparine : They are of two types.
 - 1) Unfractionated
 - 2) Low molecular weight heparine
- Warfarine
- Acitrom
- Rivaroxaban
- Fondaparinux

Newer therapy : Recent advances in field of medical science have led to newer therapy like CDT (Catheter Directed Thrombolysis) and

Venous Thromboembolectomy. Vena caval filter are devices used to prevent migration of clots from veins of the legs to lungs. They are inserted in vena cava which is the large vein that returns blood to the heart from abdomen and legs. They are used if you cannot take anticoagulations or you continue to develop blood clots even though you have been taking anticoagulations.

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