

Is a Blood Clot Causing the Pain in Your Leg? (Deep Vein Thrombosis). How to Tell. How to Prevent. (Behind Knee/Thigh, or in Calf)

There are two common places one may feel the pain coming from a blood clot in the deep veins of the legs. This sort of clot is known as a Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT). The most common location we have seen for a DVT is in the calf. However, one may also develop a clot in the deep veins behind the thigh or knee.

Common signs of a DVT:

1. Cramping or a throbbing pain in the calf, or behind the knee/thigh. This most often occur in just one leg (not both).



2. Notable swelling in one leg (not both).
(DVT)
3. The skin may feel warm around the painful area.
4. The skin may be red or discolored around the painful area.
5. Homans Sign test is + if the clot occurs in the calf.

How to perform Homan's Sign Test:

1. Person will need the help of an additional person.
2. The person with calf pain should lie on their back and straighten their knee.



3. The assistant should then raise the foot from the bed for about 6 inches and bend the foot toward the person's head-while at the same time squeezing the person's calf muscle (same leg).



4. Deep calf pain and tenderness may indicate that a clot is present.

If you do feel pain, we recommend you see your doctor immediately for an ultrasonography or venography.

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Why is a DVT dangerous?

A DVT (blood clot) can break loose, travel through your bloodstream, and get stuck in your lungs. This is a pulmonary embolism. A pulmonary embolism can threaten your life and needs to be treated immediately.

When are you more likely to get a DVT:

1. After an operation and you find yourself immobile
2. If you are on bedrest
3. If you are on long trip by plane, car, or train (greater than 3 hours)
4. Are pregnant or recently had a baby
5. If you are dehydrated

Who is at increased odds for developing a DVT:

1. If you have had a previous DVT
2. If you have varicose veins
3. If you smoke
4. If you take a contraceptive pill
5. If you are on hormone replacement therapy
6. If you have heart failure
7. If you are overweight
8. If you have cancer

Tips to prevent DVTs:

1. Do not sit still for long periods of time
 - a. Get up and walk, at least every hour
2. Perform ankle pumps frequently
 - a. Bend your ankles toward you and away (20 x/every 30 minutes)
3. Drink plenty of fluids
 - a. DVT is more likely with dehydration
4. Do not cross your legs
 - a. It can impede blood flow

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5. Do not smoke
6. Do not drink lots of alcohol

Treatment:

Treatment will generally involve some type of anticoagulant (blood thinning) medicine.