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).



- 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:

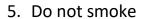
- 1. After an operation and you find yourself immobile
- 2. If you are on bedrest
- 3. If you are on long trip by plane, car, or train (greater than 3 hours)
- 4. Are pregnant or recently had a baby
- 5. If you are dehydrated

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



6. Do not drink lots of alcohol

Treatment:

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