

Preventing Blood Clots: Your Daily Guide

Medical-Surgical · Cardiovascular

A DVT is a blood clot in a deep vein, usually in the leg. If a piece breaks off and travels to your lungs (pulmonary embolism), it is an emergency. These steps help stop clots from forming.

Know your risk

- Surgery, bed rest, or sitting for a long time
- Trips longer than 4 hours
- Birth control pills, hormone pills, pregnancy, or a recent birth
- Cancer, a past blood clot, extra weight, or smoking

Keep your legs moving

- Walk as soon and as often as your care team allows.
- Every hour while awake, point and flex your feet and circle your ankles.
- Do not cross your legs. Do not sit for a long time.

Use your clot-prevention plan

- Wear compression stockings or leg pumps as prescribed. Keep stockings smooth, with no rolled tops.
- Take your blood thinner exactly as prescribed, until the end date.
- Drink plenty of fluids, unless you have a fluid limit.

On long trips

- Every 1 to 2 hours, get up and walk, or stop the car and stretch.

- Move your feet and ankles while you sit. Drink water. Limit alcohol.

If your leg hurts

- **Do not rub or massage a swollen, painful leg.** Rubbing risks moving a clot to your lungs.
- Call your provider the same day.

Call your provider today if you have

- Swelling in one leg
- A warm, red, or sore spot on one calf or thigh
- Leg pain or cramping that does not go away
- Bleeding gums or new bruises while on a blood thinner

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- Sudden shortness of breath
- Chest pain, mainly when you breathe in deeply
- Coughing up blood
- A racing heartbeat with dizziness or fainting

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: nclxpath.com/patient-education/preventing-blood-clots-dvt/patient

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