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**Title:** Common Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) Symptoms, Testing & Diagnosis

**Description:** Learn what deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is, what symptoms to look for and possible testing options to confirm a diagnosis; checklist of information for your office visit.

**Word Count:** 691 words (excluding references)

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## Three Common Symptoms of DVT

### DVT: What is Deep Vein Thrombosis?

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot in a deep vein that typically forms in the leg and is at risk for breaking off and traveling to the lungs as a pulmonary embolism (PE). This is a very serious condition and should be treated immediately.

Clots can also be found in the arms, but is more common in the legs and usually only one, not both. DVT rarely occurs in children, but the risk increases significantly over the age of 40<sup>1</sup>. Be alert to possible symptoms and call your doctor as soon as possible if you see signs of a problem. DVT can be a symptom of other conditions that affect how your blood clots and you should consult your doctor for an accurate diagnosis.

Because a deep vein thrombosis (blood clot) can break off and travel to your lungs, you should be aware of the warning signs of a pulmonary embolism (PE). This is a life-threatening condition and quick treatment could save your life or reduce the likelihood of future problems.

Warning signs of Pulmonary Embolism (PE):

- Chest pain: often feels worse if you breathe deeply or cough
- Coughing up blood
- Rapid pulse rate
- Feeling dizzy or fainting
- Sudden shortness of breath or rapid breathing

If you smoke, are over 60, overweight, and you sit for long periods of time (on a plane, at your desk, confined to bed or had recent surgery, etc.), your risk for blood clots is higher.

### Symptoms of DVT

Common symptoms of DVT are:

- Leg swelling, with tenderness, possible discoloration and a feeling of warmth to the touch
- Pain that starts in your calf and can feel like cramping or soreness
- Veins you can see that seem to be bulging
- Pain or numbness that extends to your shoulder, arm, back, teeth, jaw or face

Some studies have shown that patients with chronic kidney disease more often experience upper-extremity clots and did not always show the typical symptoms listed above.<sup>2</sup> If you experience discomfort or any of these symptoms appear suddenly, it's time to pick up the phone and call your doctor.

### Testing<sup>3</sup> and Treatment of Deep Vein Thrombosis

In order to confirm a diagnosis, your doctor may conduct one or more tests as well as ask about your medical history, symptoms, your overall health and activity level.

**Duplex ultrasound** is a non-invasive test and does not involve any radiation. Warm gel is spread on your skin and a wand is run over the area where the doctor suspects the clot to be. Images from that scan can confirm the presence of a clot or reveal something else that may be going on.

**Venography** is a special type of X-ray using radioactive dye injected into a vein. The dye provides contrast to the images and allows the doctor to see your veins and where there may be a clot.

**Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)** provides a much more detailed view of the area you're testing and can show things that an X-ray or Ultrasound can't. Images are created by pulses of radio waves and stored digitally so they can be compared to other images over time or viewed from a remote location. Sometimes, you may receive a dye injection to provide more detail in the image.

### **See your Doctor**<sup>5</sup>

It's important to get an appointment and be seen by your doctor quickly...don't wait. DVT is considered an emergency condition. It's helpful to bring along the following information:

1. Write down all your symptoms – not just those you think are part of a DVT diagnosis
2. Have a list of all your current medications with you as well as vitamins and supplements
3. Provide a brief list of family who may have a history of blood-clots
4. Share any hospitalizations, surgeries, illness or accidents as well as recent travel
5. Make a list of any questions you have for the doctor

Being aware of the symptoms of DVT and providing detailed personal information during your visit will assist your doctor in determining the next steps for diagnosis and treatment.

#### References:

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