

A Guide for Patients and Families

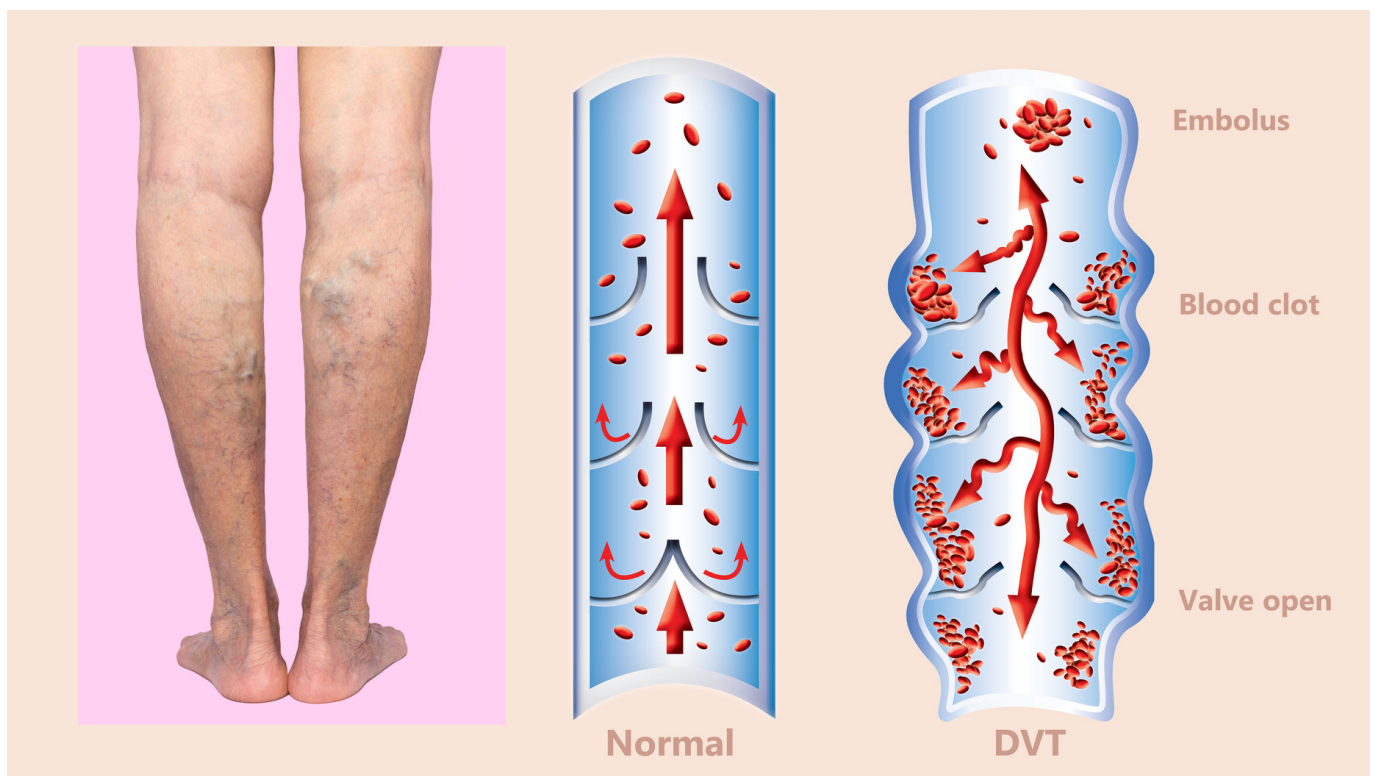
Care of Patients with Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)

What is Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)?

Deep vein thrombosis is a condition in which blood clots (or thrombi) form in deep veins in the legs or other areas of the body. Veins are the blood vessels that carry blood from the body's tissues to the heart. Deep veins are located deep in the body, away from the skin's surface.

Causes

Blood clots formed in our leg veins (deep venous thrombosis, or DVT) can travel to the lungs and block blood supply to the lungs (pulmonary embolism) which can be fatal.



Why are blood clots in deep veins a serious concern?

Blood clots in deep veins are not normal. They prevent blood from circulating, and are caused by one or more factors. Hip fracture surgery patients are at high risk of developing this.

Prolonged bedrest, dehydration, injury to the veins and substantial blood loss due to the fracture itself and during surgery are risk factors.



Signs & Symptoms:

Pain, warmth and swelling in one or both legs

Difficulty and/or pain when breathing

Chest pain which worsens with deep breaths

Coughing out blood

Rapid heartbeat

Several different test may be performed to get the evidence before you can be diagnosed with DVT. Some of the test might be carry out as below:

- Blood test called D-dimer.
- Ultrasound doppler of the lower limb.
- Magnetic resonance imaging.
- Venogram.





Diagnosis & Treatment:

Thrombectomy/thrombolysis

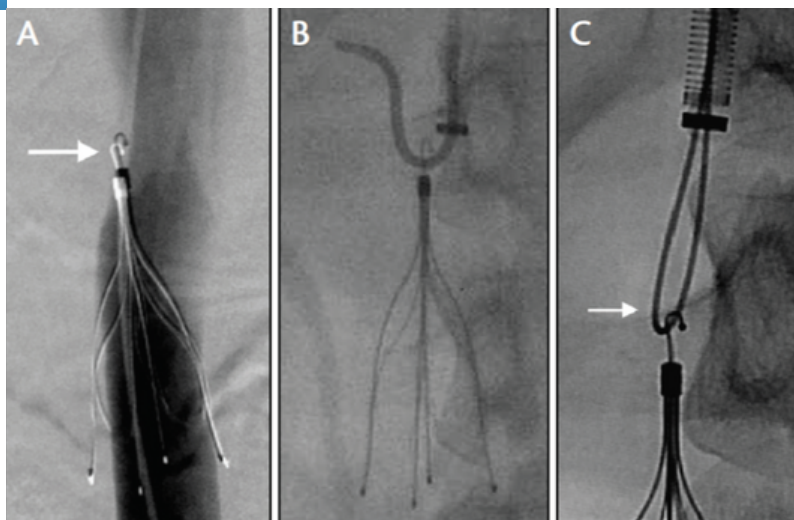
This procedure involves the administration of enzymes to dissolve the clots in the legs via catheters.

This procedure can be performed together with a mechanical thrombectomy device that aspirates the venous clots.

Inferior Vena Cava (IVC) filter insertion procedure

IVC filters are devices that are introduced into the inferior vena cava to prevent large venous clots from dislodging from the legs to the lung.

This procedure is used for patients who are at high risk of this embolism.



DVT surgery - (Your doctor may suggest surgery to remove a DVT clot in your affected area. This is typically only recommended in the case of very large blood clots.)

Surgical thrombectomy, or surgery to remove a blood clot, your surgeon will make an incision into a blood vessel and remove the clot.

In some cases, they may use a small inflating balloon to keep the blood vessel open while they remove the clot.

What can I do to prevent the development of blood clots?

Anticoagulants

Anticoagulation medication can be in oral or injection form.

Essentially, these medications prevent further clots from forming and keep the blood thin.

You will be given anticoagulants for up to 5 weeks. Please alert a healthcare professional if you experience pain, bleeding or bruises at the injection site.



Compression Calf Pump

You may perspire or feel warm when wearing the compression calf pump. They can prevent blood clots in your leg veins, so please bear with the discomfort.

Avoid sitting still

If you have had surgery or have been on bed rest for other reasons, try to get moving as soon as possible.

If you are sitting for a while, do not cross your legs, which can hamper blood flow. If you are traveling a long distance by car, stop every hour or so and walk around.

If you are on a plane, stand or walk occasionally.





Make lifestyle changes. Lose weight and quit smoking.

Regular exercise lowers your risk of blood clots, which is especially important for people who sit a lot or travel frequently.

Reduce weight if you are obese.



You should seek medical attention if you experience any worsening of symptoms of any of the following:

- Pain, warmth and swelling in one or both legs.
- Difficulty and/or pain when breathing.
- Chest pain which worsens with deep breaths.
- Coughing out blood.
- Rapid heartbeat.

You may wish to proceed to your own attending hospitals, nearest Polyclinic or family doctor for medical attention and advice.

