

DVT

Myths vs Facts

DEEP-VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT) is a blood clot that forms in a major vein of the leg or, less commonly, in the arms, pelvis, or other large veins in the body. In some cases, a clot in a vein may detach from its point of origin and travel through the heart to the lungs where it becomes wedged, preventing adequate blood flow. This is called a pulmonary embolism (PE) and it can be extremely dangerous.¹

MYTH

"I've never even heard of DVT. It can't be that serious."

MYTH

"The chances of me getting DVT are pretty low."

MYTH

"I'm really active and in great shape, so I don't need to worry about getting DVT."

MYTH

"Birth control medications will give me DVT."

MYTH

"Women are at greater risk for DVT."

FACT

Deep-vein thrombosis (DVT) is a serious and underdiagnosed medical condition that results when a blood clot forms in a vein.²

Complications from DVT

DVT 

kill more people each year than:



breast cancer



motor vehicle accidents



and HIV combined.³

FACT

It is estimated that as many as 900,000 people are affected by DVT/PE each year in the United States and up to 100,000 Americans die of DVT/PE.^{4,5} DVT can strike anyone and can cause serious illness, disability, and in some cases, death. Your risk of DVT increases if you:



have major surgery,



have cancer, heart or lung disease,



take birth control pills,



or have a family history of DVT.⁶

FACT

Almost anyone can be affected by DVT: young or old, couch potato to athlete.



FACT

While studies have shown increased risk of blood clots while taking oral contraceptives due to increased estrogen, the vast majority of women who take these medications will have no complications.⁸ Women who are obese, smoke, or over age 40 when using oral contraceptives have a higher risk of developing clots. A balanced diet, healthy weight and talking to your doctor about the benefits and risks of oral contraceptives can help.



FACT

While women have an increased risk of blood clots while pregnant or on oral contraceptives,

overall men have a higher incidence of DVT and PE.⁹



1. American Society of Hematology. Blood Clots. <http://www.hematology.org/Patients/Clots/>. Accessed February 2015.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)/Pulmonary Embolism (PE)—Blood Clot Forming in a Vein. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dvt/facts.html>. Accessed February 2015.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Blood Disorders. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/blooddisorders/aboutus.html>. Accessed February 2015.
4. Venous Thromboembolism: A Public Health Concern (Beckman et al; AJPM April 2010)
5. Surveillance for Deep Vein Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolism: Recommendations from a National Workshop (Raskob et al; AJPM April 2010)
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)/Pulmonary Embolism (PE)—Blood Clot Forming in a Vein. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dvt/facts.html>. Accessed February 2015.
7. Grabowski, G., WK Whiteside, and M. Kanwisher. "Venuous Thrombosis in Athletes." The Journal of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (2013). National Center for Biotechnology Information. U.S. National Library of Medicine. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23378374>. Accessed February 2015.
8. Office of the Surgeon General (US); National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Deep Vein Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolism. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44181/>. Accessed February 2015.
9. Office of the Surgeon General (US); National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Deep Vein Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolism. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44181/>. Accessed February 2015.