

Deep Vein Thrombosis: 7 Ways to Help Prevent DVT

A blood clot in the leg is called deep vein thrombosis, or DVT.

And sometimes DVT can cause serious problems.

A blood clot can form in the leg for many reasons.

It can happen to almost anyone, but some people are more at risk.

Risk factors can include age, family history, and having a blood clot before. Other risks may include being pregnant or being in the hospital.

The good news is that there are things you can do to keep your blood flowing.

Here are seven ways you can help prevent DVT.

One: Exercise your lower leg muscles, especially if you're sitting or need to lie down for a long time. This helps keep the blood moving through your legs.

Here's something you can try right now while sitting in your chair or even while lying in bed.

Pump your feet up and down by pulling your toes up toward your knees and then pointing them down. Repeat.

Two: Take plenty of breaks when you travel.

On long car trips, stop the car and walk around every hour or so. On the bus, plane, or train, get out of your seat and walk up and down the aisle every hour, if you can.

Three: Stay active.

Try to get 30 minutes or more of activity on most days of the week. Pick an activity that you enjoy or think you might enjoy, such as walking, dancing, or riding a bike.

Four: Don't smoke.

Smoking can increase your risk of blood clots.

If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines.

Five: Use compression stockings if your doctor prescribes them.

These are specially made, snug-fitting socks.

They may prevent blood clots by gently squeezing your legs to keep blood from pooling in them.

Six: Check with your doctor about your medicines to see whether or not they may increase your risk of blood clots.

Some medicines that can increase the risk of clots include hormone forms of birth control and hormone therapy.

And speaking of medicines, here's number seven: Some medicines called anticoagulants, or blood thinners, can help prevent DVT.

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You and your doctor can decide if anticoagulants are right for you.

Anyone can get a blood clot, even people who aren't at high risk.

But knowing the things you can do to help prevent DVT will help you stay as healthy as you can be.

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