

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT): Tips to Prevent DVT While Flying

What is deep vein thrombosis (DVT)?

DVT is a blood clot in the legs. There may be a link between development of DVT and air travel. Sitting for a long period of time without moving may increase your risk of developing DVT. Limited airline space can discourage moving about. Dry cabin air may also increase the risk of DVT. Having a history of cancer increases your risk of developing DVT.

Signs and Symptoms

Lungs: Occasionally a DVT can break free from the leg and stick in one of the pulmonary arteries that supplies blood to the lungs. This very serious condition is called pulmonary embolism.

Complications include:

- Rapid breathing
- Pain when breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain that travels up to the shoulder
- Fever
- Fainting

DVT can be found in the calf, thigh, abdomen, legs and feet. Signs and symptoms of DVT can include warmth, swelling and pain. Sometimes the skin may turn red or even blue. DVT is painful and gets worse over several days in the area around or below the clot.

Things to Do

- If you experience any of these symptoms, see a healthcare provider right away; be sure to mention that you've recently traveled on a plane.
- Ask your healthcare provider if you can take a baby aspirin (81 milligrams) one-half hour before flying.
- Wear loose clothing and comfortable shoes.
- Keep your legs uncrossed while sitting.
- Get up from your seat and walk up and down the aisle at least once an hour.
- Drink at least 8 ounces of water every hour and avoid alcohol, caffeinated beverages, and salty foods.
- Keep the space under the seat in front of you empty so you can exercise your feet and ankles throughout the flight.
- If you are at risk for DVT, consult your healthcare team. They may suggest you wear support socks or stockings.
- Calf exercises for prevention.

If you are in need of immediate assistance, please call 732-235-2465 and select the option that best meets your needs.