

# Information for patients at the Thrombosis Clinic

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**Hamilton Health Sciences  
McMaster Thrombosis Clinic, 4V1  
905-521-2100, ext. 73154**

**Hamilton Health Sciences – McMaster Site  
1200 Main Street West  
Hamilton, ON  
L8N 3Z5**

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## **What is deep vein thrombosis or a pulmonary embolism?**

A deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot in the veins in the leg or arm.

A pulmonary embolism (PE) is a blood clot in the lungs. This type of blood clot usually forms in the leg and then travels through the bloodstream to the lungs.

## **What are the signs and symptoms?**

| <b>Deep Vein Thrombosis</b>   | <b>Pulmonary Embolism</b>  |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• warmth or redness</li><li>• pain or tenderness of the calf or inside thigh</li><li>• swelling in the leg or arm</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• shortness of breath</li><li>• chest pain</li><li>• passing out</li><li>• coughing up blood</li></ul> |

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## **How are DVT and PE treated?**

Blood thinner medication is used to stop clots from getting bigger and prevent new clots from forming.

- You may be given a blood thinner medication called heparin or low molecular weight heparin. This medication can be given by injection or through an intravenous.
- You may take tablets of a blood thinner medication called warfarin (Coumadin®).

You may have to stay in the hospital if you need intravenous blood thinners or your doctor needs to check your health closely.

To relieve swelling, rest with your leg up. To relieve pain, put a cold compress on the area.

## **What can you do to help?**

It is most important to follow your treatment plan:

- Take your blood thinner medication as prescribed to prevent getting another blood clot.
- Have blood tests as directed by your doctor or nurse to make sure the blood thinner medication is working well.

If you need care from any other health care providers (such as doctors, dentist, physiotherapist, chiropractor) tell them you have had a DVT or PE and whether or not you are taking blood thinners.

When taking a long trip:

- Drink lots of water before and during your trip.
- Take a walk and stretch every couple of hours.
- Move your lower legs and ankles often when sitting and avoid crossing your legs.

Watch carefully for signs and symptoms of DVT and PE. Although it is rare, it is possible to have another blood clot – even if you are taking blood thinners.

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## **When should I get help?**

**If you have any of the following symptoms,  
call the Thrombosis Clinic:  
905-521-2100, ext 73154.**

**After hours or on weekends, go to the Emergency  
Department at the nearest hospital.**

- a fast heart beat lasting more than 5 to 10 minutes
- new or increased shortness of breath
- coughing up blood
- worsening of your current symptoms
- new leg or arm pain, or swelling that you are concerned about
- if taking blood thinners, new or unexpected bleeding, such as blood in urine or bowel movements

**If you have new, unexplained chest pain lasting  
more than 5 to 10 minutes, or severe shortness  
of breath – call 911.**

**Do not call the Thrombosis Clinic first.**

## **McMaster Thrombosis Clinic staff**

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