

What is Travel Related Thrombosis?

This is a medical condition when blood clots form in the legs or lungs related to long distance travel.

It can happen with travelling on a plane, train, bus or car.

The most common blood clots that form are deep vein thrombosis (*DVT*) and pulmonary embolism (*PE*).

Find out more at:
www.ThrombosisBC.ca



What do I do if I think I have travel related thrombosis?

Go to an emergency room or see your family physician right away.

What is DVT and what are the symptoms?

- DVT is a serious condition where blood clots develop in the deep veins of the legs.
- Symptoms include leg swelling, pain or cramping in the calf, redness or heaviness.
- DVT should not be confused with varicose veins and phlebitis (*blood clots in the superficial veins*) which are much less serious.

What is PE and what are the symptoms?

- PE occurs when blood clots develop in the lungs or travel from the deep veins in the legs to the lungs.
- This is a very serious condition and can be fatal.
- Symptoms include shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, dizziness, palpitations or coughing up blood.
- Symptoms are sometimes mistaken for a heart attack.

Why does travel related thrombosis happen?

- With long-distance travel, passengers are in seated positions for hours and reduced mobility is a trigger for clotting.
- DVT or PE is more likely to occur in those who have other reasons for clotting.



Who is more likely to get DVT or PE?

The risk of DVT or PE is higher in people with medical conditions:

- Who have had blood clots in the past
- Living with cancer or receiving treatment for cancer
- Who have heart failure or chronic lung problems
- Who had surgery or were hospitalized recently

Are healthy people at risk of DVT or PE?

Yes. DVT is also more common in people who:

- Are over 65 years of age
- Are pregnant
- Have recently had a baby
- Are taking the birth control pill
- Are taking hormone replacement therapy
- Have a family history of blood clots
- Have an inherited clotting tendency

How are DVT and PE treated?

- Blood clots are treated with anticoagulants, which prevent blood from clotting quickly.
- Some patients require admission to a hospital if they need oxygen or pain control.
- Rarely, some require urgent surgery to remove the clot or require medical treatment to rapidly breakdown the clot.

How do I reduce my risk of getting travel related thrombosis?

- Stay well hydrated. Drink lots of water and avoid alcohol.
- Wear comfortable clothing.
- Do gentle leg exercises every half hour or so. Bend and straighten your legs, rotate your ankles, press the balls of your feet hard against the floor.
- Stretch out and take walks up and down the aisle.
- Avoid sleeping pills or other sedatives.
- Wear knee-high compression stockings. These are available at most drug stores.

Are there medications to help reduce the risk?

- Anticoagulant - a drug that prevents blood from clotting quickly - are sometimes prescribed in patients who have a very high risk of getting blood clots.
- Aspirin is not recommended to help prevent travel-related thrombosis.
- See your doctor to discuss if taking an anticoagulant is the right choice for you before your next trip.

