

Preventing Deep Vein Thrombosis

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) occurs when blood clots form in a vein far below the skin. It happens most often in the legs. Inactivity, a leg injury, smoking, medical conditions (such as heart disease), and certain types of surgery can make DVT more likely. DVT can cause pain and serious health problems. To help prevent DVT, follow the steps below.

Elevation

Elevating (raising) your feet and legs helps keep blood from pooling. This makes clots less likely to form.

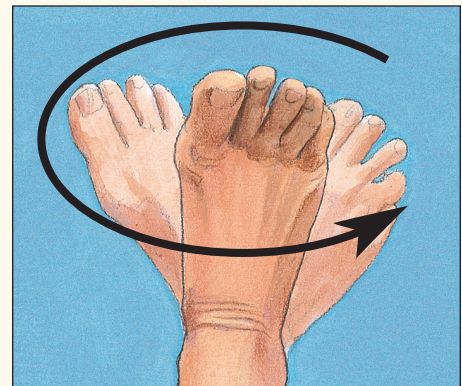
- When sitting or lying down, put your feet up. When you can, use pillows to raise your feet higher than the level of your heart.
- Place a foam wedge between your mattress and box spring at the foot of your bed. This keeps your legs elevated above your heart at night.



Exercise

Exercise keeps blood moving and helps prevent clots.

- Do a few foot exercises every half hour to keep blood moving while you sit or stand.
- When sitting or standing for long stretches of time, change your position often. If sitting, get up and move around every hour.
- Ask your doctor what other kind of exercise (such as swimming or walking) is good for you.



Compression

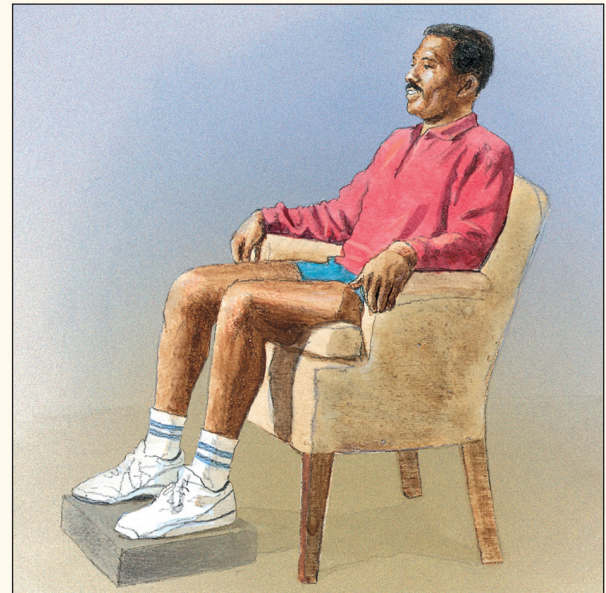
Elastic support stockings squeeze (compress) the legs to help improve blood flow. Your healthcare provider will prescribe these stockings for you if you need them.

- Stockings are fitted to your legs. Wear them as directed.
- Putting these stockings on can be hard. Ask about special tools that can help you put them on.



Other Tips

- If you smoke, try to quit. Smoking makes DVT more likely.
- Take medications as directed.
- Avoid sitting with crossed legs or lying with crossed ankles.
- Avoid tight clothing. (Prescription stockings are the only exception.) Avoid garments with tight elastic. Don't wear clothes or shoes that pinch or leave red marks.
- Keep your skin clean and dry.
- Inspect the skin on your legs daily for any changes.
- Don't rub or massage your legs.



Avoid sitting with crossed legs.

When to Call Your Healthcare Provider

Call your healthcare provider if you notice any of these signs:

- Pain, redness, or swelling in a leg
- Skin changes such as scaling, brown spots, or sores on a leg
- Sharp, stabbing pain in your side, back, or chest
- Rapid heartbeat
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Fever over 101°F (38.3°C)
- Sweating
- Sudden, unexplained cough
- Bloody, coughed-up mucus
- Severe headache

Special Instructions:

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www.kramestaywell.com 800.333.3032

Consultant:
Simone Perich, RN, BSN

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