

Blood Clot Warning Signs

Know the signs. Know your risk. Get help fast.

Educational only, not medical advice.



A **DVT** is a clot in a deep vein, most often in the leg. A **PE** happens when part of that clot breaks off and travels to the lungs, and it needs immediate care.¹ As many as **900,000 people in the US** could be affected each year, and for about **1 in 4 people with a PE, sudden death is the first symptom.**²

A PE IS AN EMERGENCY

Signs, risks, and what to do

- ☐ **Leg signs (DVT).** Swelling, pain or tenderness, warmth, or redness in one leg or arm. About half of people with a DVT have no symptoms at all. See your doctor as soon as possible.¹
- ☐ **Lung signs (PE).** Trouble breathing, a fast or irregular heartbeat, chest pain that worsens with a deep breath or cough, coughing up blood, lightheadedness, or fainting. You can have a PE without any leg symptoms.¹
- ☐ **Know your risk.** Long trips over 4 hours, surgery or bed rest, injury, cancer and its treatment, pregnancy, estrogen including birth control pills, obesity, family history, or a past clot. Risk goes up with age, especially after 40.^{1,3}
- ☐ **Keep moving.** On long rides or flights, get up and walk every 1 to 2 hours. While seated, raise and lower your heels and toes and tighten your leg muscles.¹
- ☐ **Ask before surgery.** If you're at risk, ask your doctor about compression stockings or medicine to lower your clot risk.^{1,3}

Red flags: when to get help

CDC: If you have any signs of a PE, **seek medical help immediately.** Leg signs of a DVT mean **see your doctor as soon as possible.**¹

Dr. Jocko's ER guidance: Sudden trouble breathing or chest pain? Call 911. Don't drive yourself.

Sources

1. CDC, About Venous Thromboembolism (Blood Clots) (Mar 5, 2025): [cdc.gov/blood-clots/about/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/blood-clots/about/index.html)
 2. CDC, Data and Statistics on Venous Thromboembolism (Jan 27, 2025): [cdc.gov/blood-clots/data-research/facts-stats/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/blood-clots/data-research/facts-stats/index.html)
 3. NHLBI, Venous Thromboembolism: Causes and Risk Factors: [nhlbi.nih.gov/health/venous-thromboembolism/causes](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/venous-thromboembolism/causes)
- Call 911 line: Dr. Jocko's ER guidance. Educational only, not medical advice. All accessed Oct 19, 2026.