

To help reduce any pain and swelling and protect your skin you can:

- ◆ raise the leg to help reduce swelling
- ◆ keep active to keep the blood circulating
- ◆ press a cold flannel over the vein to ease any pain
- ◆ pain killers may be recommended by your Doctor
- ◆ use anti-inflammatory pain relief (unless anticoagulant medication)
- ◆ Drink plenty of water to keep hydrated
- ◆ moisturise your leg or arm every day.

When taking anticoagulants it is important to:

- ◆ Take medication regularly at the same time each day
- ◆ Keep all clinic appointments
- ◆ Let your doctor know if you become pregnant or are planning on becoming pregnant.

If you experience any of the following symptoms while taking an anticoagulant please seek immediate medical attention:

- ◆ Chest pain
- ◆ Shortness of breath
- ◆ Bleeding cuts that won't stop
- ◆ Sudden change in your health
- ◆ Bleeding gums
- ◆ Unexplained or severe bruising
- ◆ Blood in vomit or sputum or saliva
- ◆ Blood in urine or stools, or black stools

Future considerations:

When the inflammation settles, you may be left with a patch of darkened skin and potentially a lump that may take three or four months to go. Most people will make a full recovery. If the SVT occurred in a varicose vein, it is likely that the varicose veins will keep coming back, possibly with further episodes of SVT.

Once you have completed the treatment for your SVT, in the future if you develop recurrent signs or symptoms of SVT, or any signs or symptoms of a DVT or PE, you should seek medical attention.

References:

Superficial Vein Thrombosis (SVT) Information for Patients, King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. PL891.1 July 2020

Patient Information Factsheet Superficial Thrombophlebitis, University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust. V1 May 2019.

This leaflet is for general information only and is not a substitute for medical advice.



Registered Charity
No: 20154240

Superficial Vein Thrombosis?



Registered Charity No: 20154240

Email: info@thrombosisireland.ie

www.thrombosis.ie

Phone: 087 363 4828

Mon. – Fri. 10am – 2pm

Superficial Vein Thrombosis

Version 001 - May 2023

Superficial Vein Thrombosis?

What is superficial vein thrombosis (SVT)?

Superficial vein thrombosis is the term for inflammation (swelling) of a superficial vein caused by a blood clot. These are veins near the surface of your skin and SVT usually occurs in the legs, but you can also get clots in superficial veins in other parts of your body, such as your arms.

What are the symptoms of superficial vein thrombosis?

- ◆ SVT results in painful, hard lumps underneath the skin and redness of the overlying skin.
- ◆ visible hardening of the vein, with redness of the skin over the vein and surrounding area. Because the blood in the vein is clotted, the vein feels like a hard cord under the skin, not like a normal varicose vein.

Most people with SVT are otherwise well. The lumps under your skin may be painful, but they shouldn't stop you from walking well. Please contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you notice any discharge or an abscess (a painful collection of pus, usually caused by a bacterial infection), or if your whole limb begins to swell.



What causes superficial vein thrombosis?

Your blood usually flows quickly through the veins in your leg because of the squeezing action of your muscles as you move. This stops clots from forming. When a superficial vein blood clot develops, the flow through the vein is either partially or completely blocked.

You are more at risk of SVT if you:

- ◆ have varicose veins
- ◆ have had previous vein problems or blood clots
- ◆ have recently had injections or a drip put into a vein
- ◆ have active cancer
- ◆ are pregnant
- ◆ smoke
- ◆ take oestrogen containing oral contraceptive pill including the vaginal ring or you are taking oral or high dose transdermal hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- ◆ are overweight
- ◆ have a family history of DVT/PE
- ◆ have a condition that causes the blood to clot more easily, such as thrombophilia
- ◆ have reduced mobility caused by having a major operation, an illness or injury, or long journeys where you cannot get up and move around

Are there complications of superficial vein thrombosis?

There is a small chance that the blood clot may travel along the superficial vein resulting in development of a deep vein thrombosis (DVT). This is more likely to happen if the surface blood clot spreads into areas where superficial veins meet

deeper veins, such as the upper thigh, groin or behind the knee. It's also more likely to occur if the affected vein is a normal vein rather than a varicose vein, if you've had a DVT before or if you're immobile. A DVT can cause pain, swelling and a heavy ache in your leg or arm.

Blood clots in deep veins can break off and travel to your lungs, where they can block the blood vessels supplying blood to the lungs. This blockage is called a pulmonary embolism (PE). A PE can cause you to cough up blood-stained spit, have chest pain and feel short of breath.

Whilst being treated for SVT, if increasing leg or arm symptoms occur or you have signs of PE you should attend the Emergency Department.

What are the symptoms of a DVT (Deep Vein Thrombosis)?

- ◆ Swelling or pain in one leg or arm
- ◆ Warmth or redness in one the leg or arm

What are the symptoms of a PE (Pulmonary Embolism)?

- ◆ Shortness of breath or rapid breathing
- ◆ Chest pain (particularly when breathing deeply)
- ◆ Coughing or coughing up blood
- ◆ Collapse

If you have one or more of these symptoms, you may have a clot and need urgent treatment.

How is superficial vein thrombosis treated?

Depending on the extent and underlying risk factors, for a defined period of time you may receive treatment as advised by your doctor or pharmacist. Your doctor will advise regarding the best option for you.