

If you are going into hospital, ask for you're a VTE Risk Assessment to evaluate your personal risk. If the assessment shows that you are at risk, you will be given a small dose of blood thinners. You can also reduce your risk by limiting the amount of time you spend either lying in bed or sitting in a chair during the day, so get up and move about regularly if possible.

## TREATMENT FOR POST THROMBOTIC SYNDROME:

Physical treatment options may include;

- ◆ Sitting with the leg raised
- ◆ Moisturise your leg or arm every day.
- ◆ Grade 2 compression stocking may be recommended in certain patients by their doctor for symptom relief. They however have little benefit in preventing DVT, or venous ulceration.
- ◆ Taking regular exercise
- ◆ Drink plenty of water to keep hydrated
- ◆ Losing weight
- ◆ Pain killers are often recommended to help reduce the soreness.
- ◆ Caring for the wound if you have venous ulcers.
- ◆ In more extreme cases, intermittent pneumatic compression, which involves using a pump to apply external pressure to the leg by inflating and deflating plastic 'boots' can be used.

Although the treatment of post thrombotic syndrome with drugs has been studied, drugs are not widely used because none have been shown to be of major benefit. If standard treatment is not working for you, and particularly if you develop leg ulcers due to poor blood flow, your doctor may consider referring you to

a vascular surgeon to see if there is a surgical procedure that might help.

An often overlooked but very common problem for many patients who have had a deep vein thrombosis, and especially those who have had a pulmonary embolism, is the overwhelming anxiety they experience in the weeks, months and even years after their initial condition. If you are experiencing this type of anxiety as a result of a blood clot, please reach out to us and we will support you in the best way we can. Don't be alone. We also have a patient leaflet 'Look after your Mind' on our website <https://thrombosis.ie/more-info/>

There are still many unanswered questions about post thrombotic syndrome and much more research is needed to understand what causes PTS, how to prevent it and how to treat it, and to understand why some people seem to be more prone to it than others.

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



Registered Charity  
No: 20154240

## Post Thrombotic Syndrome (PTS)

Version 001 - March 2023

## Post Thrombotic Syndrome (PTS)



Registered Charity No: 20154240

Email: [info@thrombosisireland.ie](mailto:info@thrombosisireland.ie)  
[www.thrombosis.ie](http://www.thrombosis.ie)  
Phone: 087 363 4828  
Mon. – Fri. 10am – 2pm

## Post Thrombotic Syndrome (PTS)

Post thrombotic syndrome, also known as post phlebitis syndrome, is a common and an under appreciated complication of deep vein thrombosis (DVT). It is a chronic and potentially disabling condition, caused by damage to the veins resulting in increased pressure on the vein walls and damage to the valves which normally work to keep blood flowing up the leg. A reduction in the amount of blood being carried away from the foot and lower leg can lead to pain, swelling and, in the most severe cases, leg ulcers, which are often slow to heal. Up to 30% of people who have had thrombosis in the leg will develop some aching or cramping post thrombotic symptoms within five years. Most episodes of post thrombotic syndrome will develop within six months to two years of the initial thrombosis. Some people will go on to develop severe problems, including venous ulcers and sever pain.

People who have had more than one episode of deep vein thrombosis in the same leg are at higher risk of developing post thrombotic syndrome. People with DVT in the upper body may also develop post thrombotic syndrome in the upper body, but this is much less common than PTS in the lower body. There are no established treatments or prevention methods for PTS in the upper body, but patients may find that wearing a compression sleeve helps reduce pain and swelling.

Post thrombotic syndrome is a persistent and debilitating long-term condition which can have a significant effect on a patient's quality of life. It can produce both physical and psychological symptoms

which can limit a person's day to day activities, some times quite markedly. Some patients may need to stop taking part in certain sporting and other leisure activities, and many people find that their PTS also reduces their self-esteem and affects their family and personal relationships. At work it can cause loss of productivity, lead to adaptations needing to be made to work environments or practices, or may even mean the patient can no longer work at all.

### PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF PTS INCLUDE:

- ◆ Aching or cramping.
- ◆ A feeling of heaviness in the limb.
- ◆ Itching, tingling or pins and needles
- ◆ Swelling
- ◆ Discoloration of the skin
- ◆ Hardening of the skin
- ◆ Varicose veins
- ◆ Venous ulcers

The symptoms can be mild, moderate or severe and can differ hugely between patients. PTS symptoms are typically worse after walking or standing for long periods of time, although we have found many people also report problems after sitting for long periods, and these symptoms often improve after resting or sitting with the limb raised.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS OF PTS MAY INCLUDE:

- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Anxiety
- ◆ Loss of confidence

The most effective way to avoid post thrombotic syndrome is to prevent deep vein thrombosis from happening in the first place. Know what your risks are and reduce them if you can. Risk factors for developing a deep vein thrombosis are:

### YOU MAY BE AT HIGHER RISK IF:

- ◆ Are admitted to hospital and for 90 days after you go home.
- ◆ Have active cancer or receiving cancer treatment
- ◆ Are pregnant or had a baby less than 6 weeks ago
- ◆ Become immobile (more than 3 days in bed/ travel non-stop for more than 6 hours/ in a leg or arm cast?)

### YOUR RISK MAY INCREASE FURTHER IF:

- ◆ You or a close relative had a blood clot
- ◆ You had a surgery in the last 90 days
- ◆ You have thrombophilia (tendency to clot)
- ◆ You are If you are taking oestrogen containing contraceptives, including the vaginal ring or you are on oral or very high dose transdermal HRT
- ◆ You have heart, lung or inflammatory disease
- ◆ You have varicose veins that become red and sore

Blood clots do not usually happen for one reason. They normally occur when you have been exposed to two or more of these risks at the same time.

If you do experience a blood clot, it is very important to start to exercise as soon as your Doctor is happy for you to do so and your anticoagulation medication is working well (Usually within a week) This will help to reduce you chances of developing PTS. See our 'Exercise after a blood Clot' leaflet on our website

<https://thrombosis.ie/more-info/>