

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) Discharge Information

What is deep vein thrombosis (DVT)?

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) occurs when a blood clot forms in a deep-lying vein, usually in the legs. Such a clot is dangerous because the clot may break loose, travel through your bloodstream, and block arteries in your lungs, causing permanent damage or death.

You are at a higher risk for forming a DVT if:

- You must lie or sit still for a long time when recovering from an illness or injury (such as after surgery or while wearing a cast), or when taking a long plane flight or car ride
- Your ability to move around is limited due to a serious medical condition, such as chronic lung disease, severe obesity, or a heart condition
- You have inherited a blood-clotting disorder
- You take a medicine that increases the tendency for blood to clot, such as birth control pills

How can I take care of myself when I go home?

How long it takes to get better depends on your treatment, how well you recover, your overall health, and any complications you may have. It is very important to follow your provider's instructions in order to make a full recovery. The actions you take to care for yourself when you have a DVT may help prevent serious complications.

Management

- Your provider will give you a list of your medicines when you leave the hospital.
 - Know your medicines. Know what they look like, how much you should take each time, how often you should take them, and why you take each one.
 - Take your medicines exactly as your provider tells you to.
 - Carry a list of your medicines in your wallet or purse. Include any nonprescription medicines and supplements on the list.
 - Before taking any new medicines, even nonprescription drugs, contact your healthcare provider. Many medicines, including some antibiotics, can interfere with or increase the effects of blood thinners.
 - If you take blood thinner medicine, do not take aspirin unless specifically told to by your provider.
- Your provider may prescribe medicine to:
 - Prevent blood clots
 - Treat pain

- Treat or prevent an infection
- If you have had surgery, to care for your incision:
 - Keep your incision clean.
 - If you are told to change your dressing on your incision, wash your hands before changing the dressing and after disposing of the dressing.

Appointments

- Follow your provider's instructions for follow-up appointments.
- Keep appointments for any routine testing you may need.
- If you take a blood thinner, you will need regular blood tests to check your blood clotting time. Follow your healthcare provider's schedule for having these tests.
- Talk with your provider about any questions or fears you have.

Diet, Exercise, and Other Lifestyle Changes

- Follow the treatment plan your healthcare provider prescribes.
- Follow activity restrictions, such as not driving or operating machinery, as recommended by your healthcare provider or pharmacist, especially if you are taking pain medicines.
- Get plenty of rest while you're recovering. Try to get at least 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Ask your healthcare provider if there are any foods or medicines you should avoid. Some foods can change the effects of blood thinners.
- Lose weight if you need to and keep a healthy weight.
- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine light yellow in color, unless you are told to limit fluids.
- Exercise as your provider recommends.
- Don't smoke. Smoking increases the risk for blood clots.
- Avoid sitting for long periods of time. Avoid crossing your legs and ankles when you sit.
- When you are traveling, move your feet and legs often.
- Find ways to make your life less stressful.
- Ask your provider about support stockings you can wear to help prevent clots. Make sure you know how to wear them correctly.
- Avoid wearing anything on your legs that blocks the return of blood from the feet to the heart, such as socks or hose with a tight elastic band at the top.
- Keep your legs raised when you are in bed or sitting down. Leg elevation promotes the return of blood through the leg veins.
- If you are currently being treated for DVT, do not massage your legs. Massage could cause the clot to break loose.
- Blood thinners will make you bleed more than usual. To help prevent cuts, consider wearing rubber gloves or garden gloves for household and outdoor work. Don't walk barefoot.

Call emergency medical services or 911 if you have new or worsening:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Coughing up blood
- Bluish color and coldness in your arm or leg

If you have any of these symptoms, do not drive yourself.

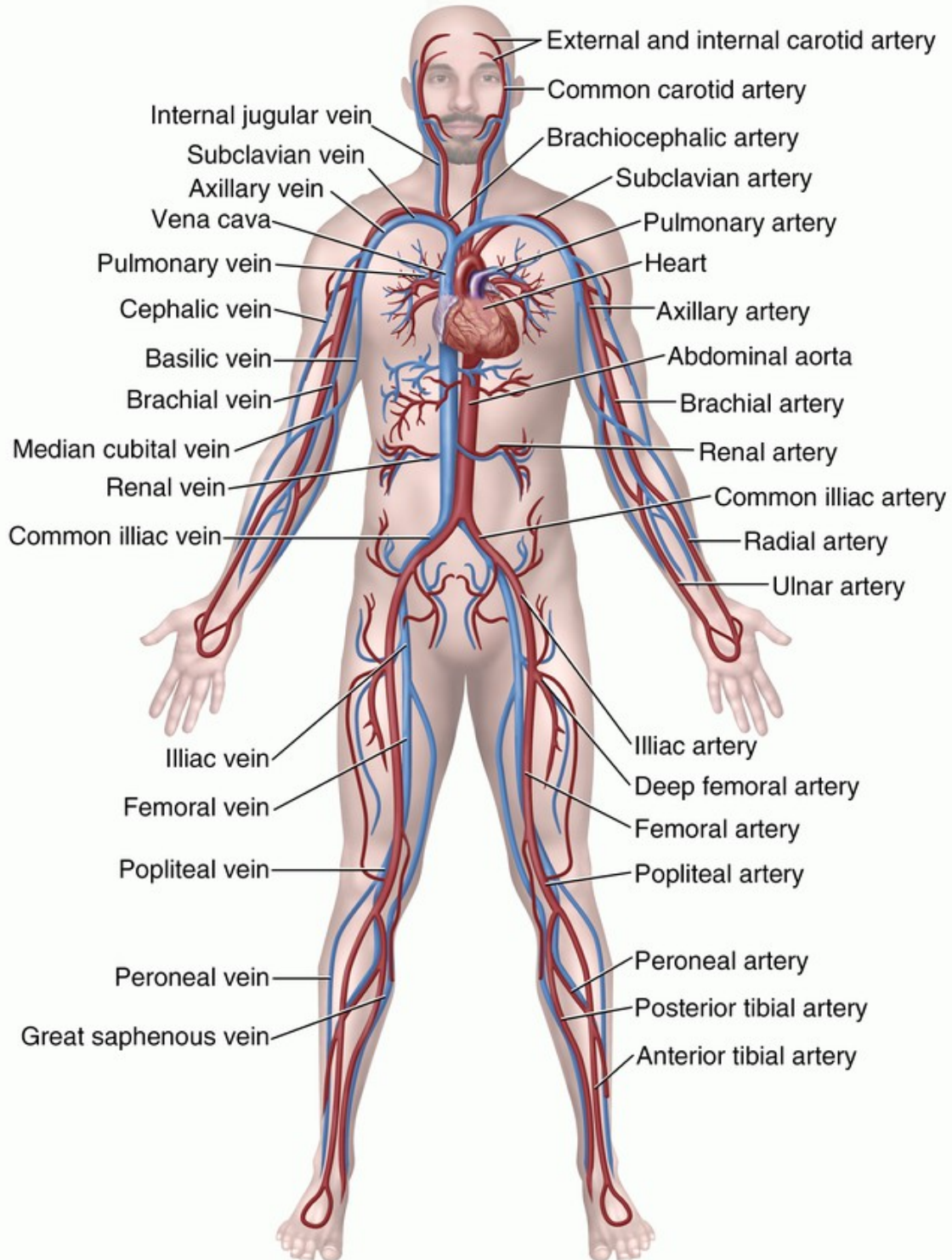
Call your healthcare provider if you have new or worsening:

- Pain, redness, or swelling in your legs or arms
- Trouble breathing
- Unusual or unexpected bleeding, including:
 - Bleeding from your ears or nose
 - Black, tarry bowel movements or blood in your bowel movement
 - Blood in your urine or red or brown colored urine
 - Blood in your vomit or dark brown or black material in your vomit that looks like coffee grounds
 - New bruises with no known cause or severe bruising
- Signs of infection around your surgical wound if you had surgery. These include:
 - The area around your wound is more red or painful
 - Your wound area is very warm to touch
 - You have blood, pus, or other fluid coming from the wound area
 - You have a fever higher than 101.5° F (38.6° C)
 - You have chills or muscle aches

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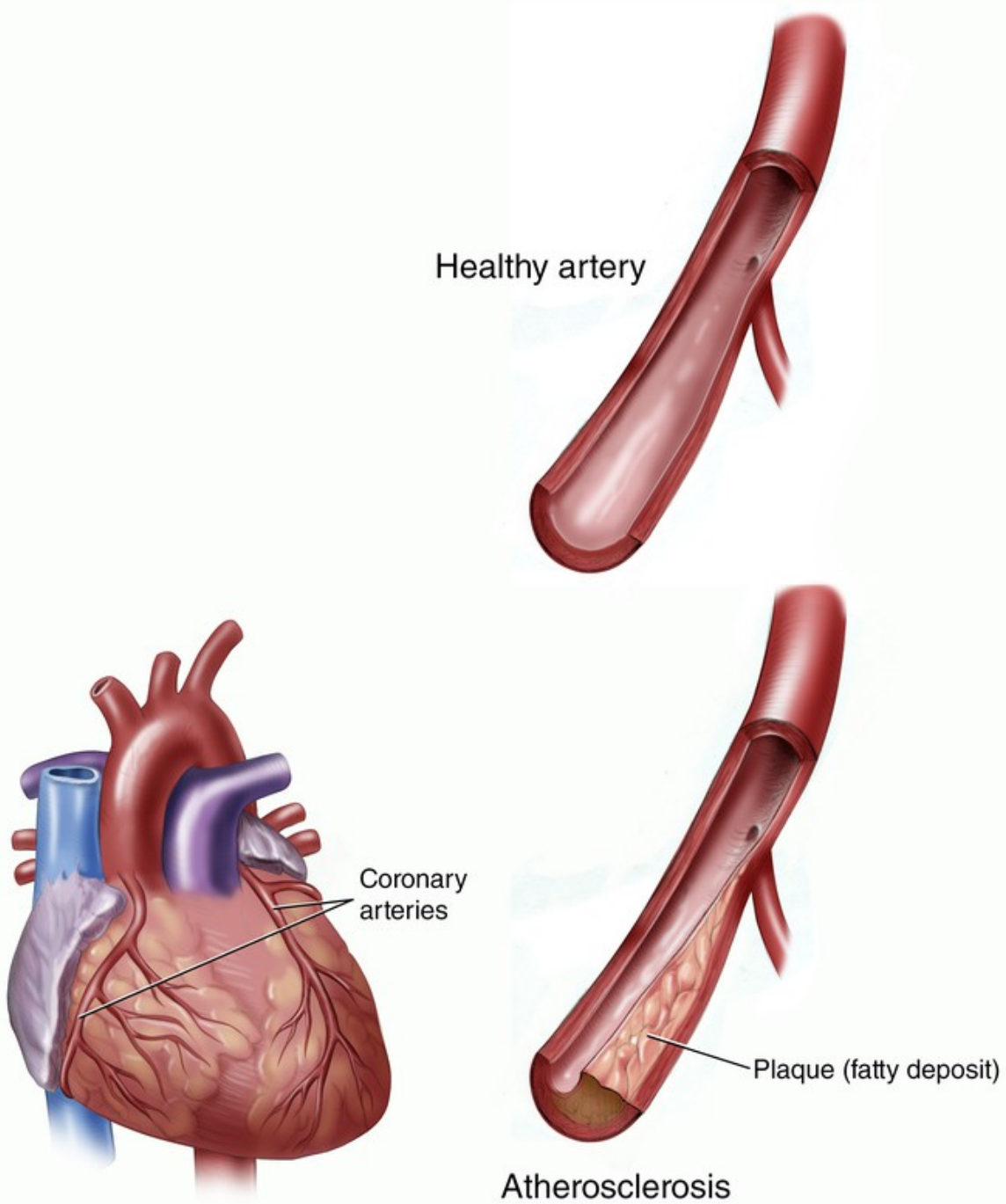
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Circulatory System



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Plaque Buildup in Arteries



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