

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)

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

What can I expect in the hospital?

Several things may be done while you are in the hospital to monitor, test, and treat your condition. They include:

Monitoring

- You will be checked often by the hospital staff.
- A heart (cardiac) monitor may be used to keep track of your heartbeat.
- Your blood oxygen level will be monitored by a sensor that is attached to your finger or earlobe.
- Your legs may be measured to compare the size of the affected leg with the normal leg.

Testing

Testing may include:

- Blood tests to check blood thickness and its ability to form clots
- Ultrasound scan: Sound waves and their echoes are passed through your body from a small device (called a transducer) that is held against your skin to create pictures of the inside of the blood vessels to help locate any clots or narrowing of veins, and measure how fast the blood flows through the veins
- Contrast venography (Venogram): X-rays taken after a special dye is injected into a vein to show any blockages in your veins
- Impedance plethysmography (IPG): A test in which your healthcare provider or a technologist places a pressure cuff on your arm or leg to measure how well the blood is flowing through your veins

- Computed tomography (CT) scan: A series of X-rays taken from different angles and arranged by a computer to show thin cross sections of the blood vessels

Treatment

- The goals of treatment are:
 - Prevent the clot from getting bigger
 - Prevent complications of the clot, such as a stroke
 - Allow time for the clot to dissolve
 - Prevent new clots
- Treatment may include:
 - You will have a small tube (IV catheter) inserted into a vein in your hand or arm. This will allow for medicine to be given directly into your blood and to give you fluids, if needed.
 - You may receive oxygen through a small tube placed under your nose or through a mask placed over your face.
 - Your provider may prescribe medicine to:
 - Dissolve or break down blood clots
 - Prevent blood clots
 - Treat pain
 - Treat or prevent an infection
 - Your healthcare provider will also prescribe bed rest to help reduce the risk that a piece of the clot will break off and cause problems somewhere else in your body.
 - You may need surgery to remove the blood clot removed.

What can I do to help?

- You will need to tell your healthcare team if you have any new or worsening:
 - Shortness of breath
 - Chest pain
 - Coughing up blood
 - Bluish color and coldness in your arm or leg
 - Swelling, warmth, redness, or pain in your leg
 - Dizziness or fainting
 - Headaches
 - Abdominal pain
 - Weakness
 - Unusual bruising, cuts that do not stop bleeding or blood in your bowel movement
 - Signs of infection around your surgical wound if you had surgery. These include:
 - The area around your wound is more red or painful

- The wound area is very warm to touch
- You have blood, pus, or other fluid coming from your wound area
- You have chills or muscle aches
- Ask questions about any medicine or treatment or information that you do not understand.

How long will I be in the hospital?

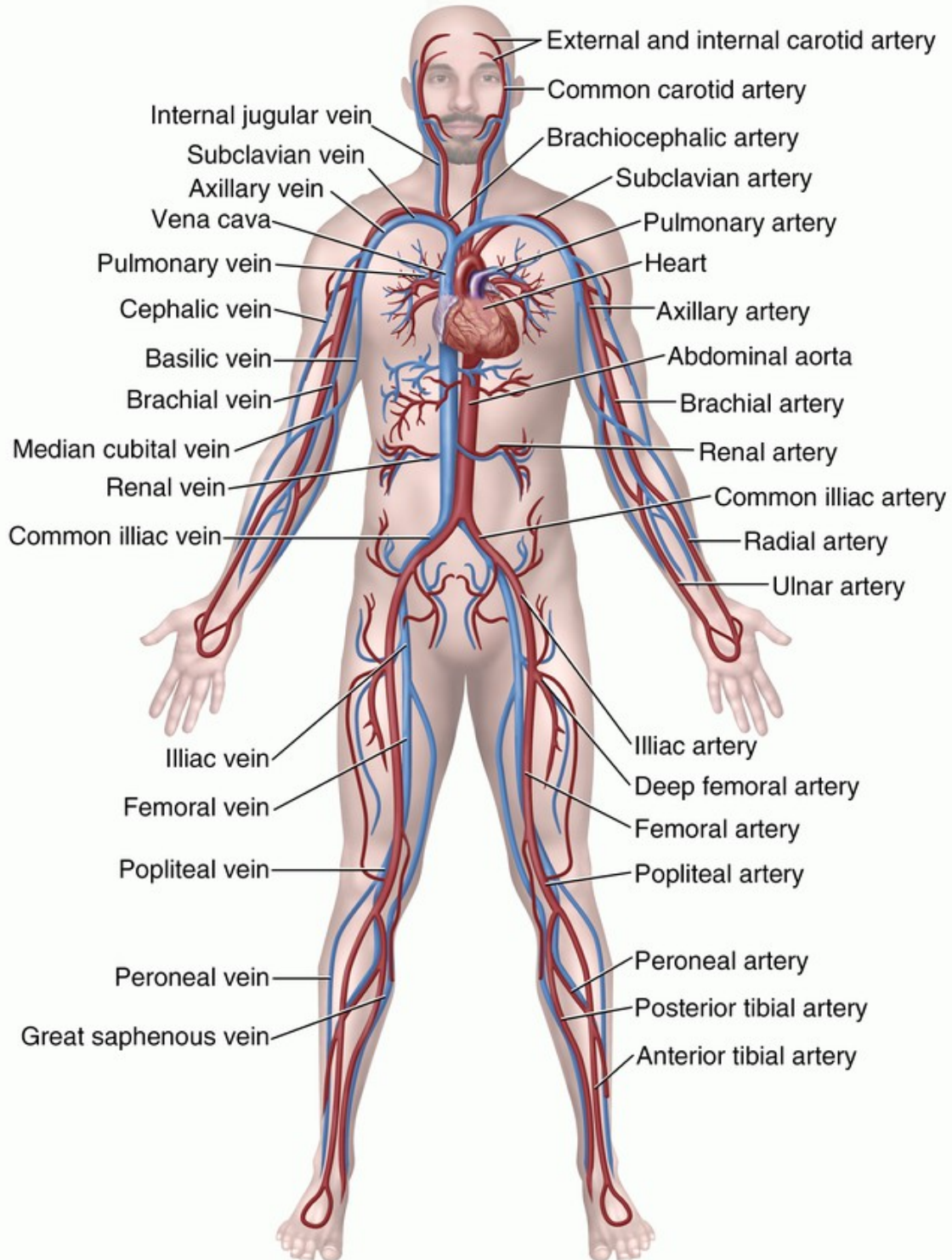
How long you stay in the hospital depends on the size of the clot, how easily medicines dissolve the clot, and the reason the clot formed. The average amount of time to stay in the hospital after DVT is 5 to 7 days.

Most people need to take blood thinner drugs for 3 to 6 months after they leave the hospital. If you have a very high risk of getting more clots, you may need to take a blood thinner for the rest of your life.

Developed by RelayHealth.

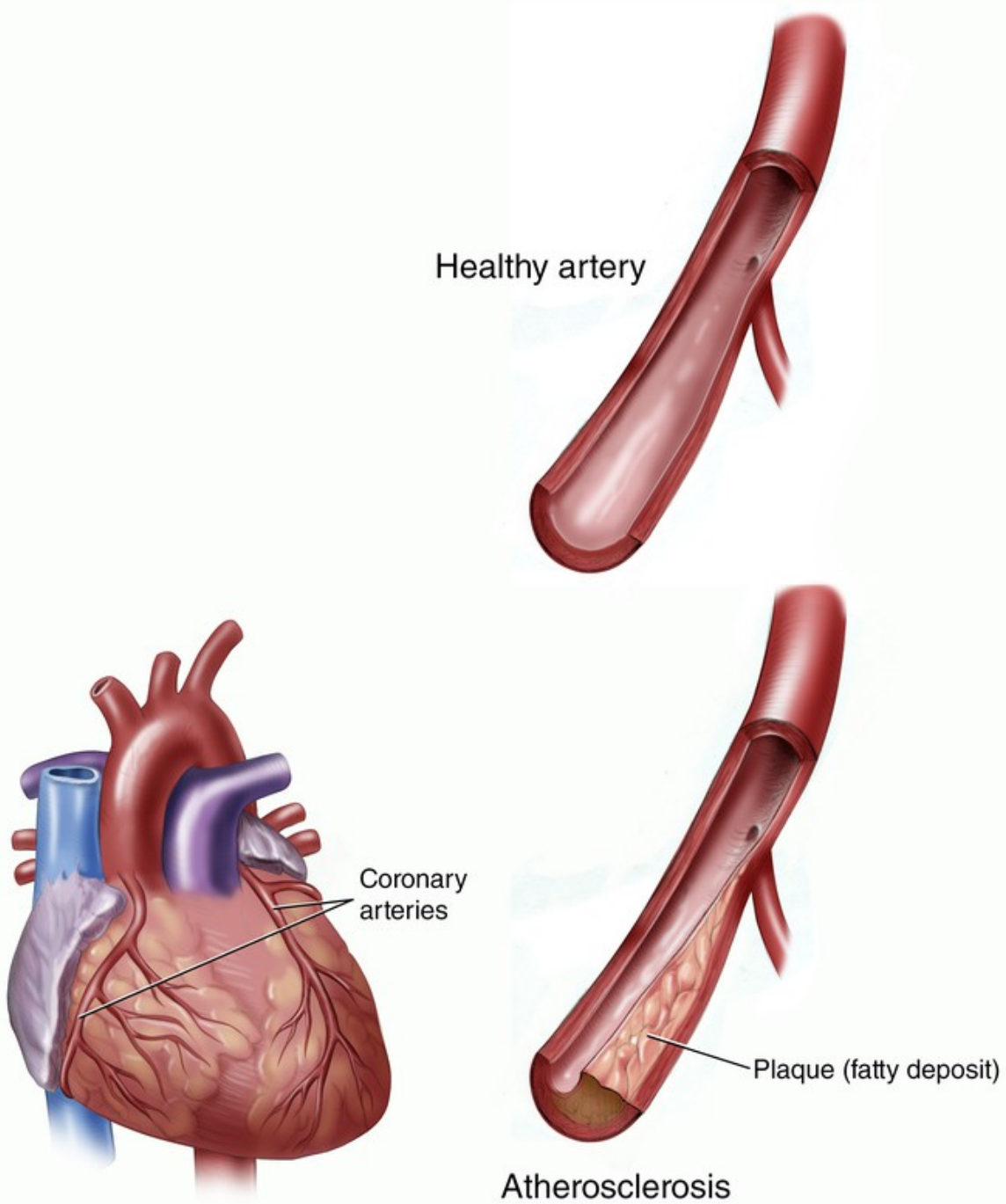
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Circulatory System



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Plaque Buildup in Arteries



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