

# What is Travel Related Thrombosis?

This is a medical condition when blood clots form in the legs or lungs related to long distance travel.

It can happen with travelling on a plane, train, bus or car.

The most common blood clots that form are deep vein thrombosis (*DVT*) and pulmonary embolism (*PE*).

Find out more at: www.ThrombosisBC.ca



What do I do if I think I have travel related thrombosis?

Go to an emergency room or see your family physician right away.

#### What is DVT and what are the symptoms?

- DVT is a serious condition where blood clots develop in the deep veins of the legs.
- Symptoms include leg swelling, pain or cramping in the calf. redness or heaviness.

**Travel Related Thrombosis** 

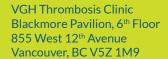
 DVT should not be confused with varicose veins and phlebitis (blood clots in the superficial veins) which are much less serious.

#### What is PE and what are the symptoms?

- PE occurs when blood clots develop in the lungs or travel from the deep veins in the legs to the lungs.
- This is a very serious condition and can be fatal.
- Symptoms include shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, dizziness, palpitations or coughing up blood.
- Symptoms are sometimes mistaken for a heart attack.

## Why does travel related thrombosis happen?

- With long-distance travel, passengers are in seated positions for hours and reduced mobility is a trigger for clotting.
- DVT or PE is more likely to occur in those who have other reasons for clotting.



Tel: 604.675.2481 www.ThrombosisBC.ca



#### Who is more likely to get DVT or PE?

The risk of DVT or PE is higher in people with medical conditions:

- Who have had blood clots in the past
- Living with cancer or receiving treatment for cancer
- Who have heart failure or chronic lung problems
- Who had surgery or were hospitalized recently

Are healthy people at risk of DVT or PE?

Yes. DVT is also more common in people who:

- Are over 65 years of age
- Are pregnant
- Have recently had a baby
- Are taking the birth control pill
- Are taking hormone replacement therapy
- Have a family history of blood clots
- Have an inherited clotting tendency

#### How are DVT and PE treated?

- Blood clots are treated with anticoagulants, which prevent blood from clotting quickly.
- Some patients require admission to a hospital if they need oxygen or pain control.
- Rarely, some require urgent surgery to remove the clot or require medical treatment to rapidly breakdown the clot.

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### How do I reduce my risk of getting travel related thrombosis?

- Stay well hydrated. Drink lots of water and avoid alcohol.
- Wear comfortable clothing.
- Do gentle leg exercises every half hour or so. Bend and straighten your legs, rotate your ankles, press the balls of your feet hard against the floor.
- Stretch out and take walks up and down the aisle.
- Avoid sleeping pills or other sedatives.
- Wear knee-high compression stockings. These are available at most drug stores.

#### Are there medications to help reduce the risk?

- Anticoagulant a drug that prevents blood from clotting quickly - are sometimes prescribed in patients who have a very high risk of getting blood clots.
- Aspirin is not recommended to help prevent travel-related thrombosis.
- See your doctor to discuss if taking an anticoagulant is the right choice for you before your next trip.

