

Post Thrombotic Syndrome (PTS)

What is post thrombotic syndrome?

PTS is a chronic (long-term) problem that develops after a patient has a clot in the deep veins of the legs (deep vein thrombosis; DVT). PTS develops because the clot blocks blood flow returning to the heart, leading to increased pressure in the veins of the legs.

What are the main symptoms of PTS?

The increased pressure in the veins may lead to pain, swelling, and changes in the skin, including the development of ulcers (also called venous or stasis ulcers). Other symptoms include cramps, itchiness, and heaviness of the legs.

How often does PTS develop?

It's estimated that 1 in 3 patients who develop clots in the leg veins will develop some symptoms of PTS.

Why does PTS develop?

The exact reason isn't fully known. Blood clots and blockages in the veins lead to increased pressure, disturbing blood circulation in the legs and leading to the symptoms of PTS.

Can PTS be prevented?

It's important to try to reduce the risk of developing PTS after a leg clot. An important way to do this is by using compression stockings (see information sheet on Graduated Compression Stockings). These can reduce swelling, improve blood flow in the legs, and help avoid PTS. Compression stockings need to be used for a long time after developing a clot in the legs.

What can be done for PTS once it has developed?

Once PTS has developed, it's difficult to manage. Prevention is key, but once symptoms have developed there are some approaches to reduce them — mainly reducing venous pressure by elevating the leg where possible and using compression stockings. Specially designed compression stockings are available for people with PTS. Surgery for PTS is not generally recommended, since its effects can be more severe than the symptoms of PTS itself.

References

1. Non-pharmaceutical measures for prevention of post-thrombotic syndrome. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2006(Issue 4).
2. Antithrombotic therapy for venous thromboembolic disease: the Seventh ACCP Conference on Antithrombotic and Thrombolytic Therapy. Chest. 2004;126(3 Suppl):401S-428S.

Further Questions?

The information presented in this fact sheet is intended as a general guide only.

Patients should seek further advice and information about **Post Thrombotic Syndrome (PTS)** and their individual condition from their treating haematologist or doctor.

For additional information about blood disorders and their treatment, or to contact one of our specialist

haematologists, visit the Melbourne Haematology website:
www.melbournehaematology.com.au