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Why are some blood clots dangerous and a health concern?

Blood clots can form in arteries and veins, where they can obstruct blood flow and lead to life-threatening health problems, such as deep vein thrombosis (DVT), pulmonary embolism (PE), stroke, or heart attack.

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What is deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism?

A deep vein thrombosis or DVT is a blood clot that forms in the deep veins of a person's leg or arm. A DVT can grow larger or break apart and travel to a person's lung, where it becomes a life-threatening pulmonary embolism or PE.

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What are some of the main risks for dangerous blood clots?

In general, some of the most common risk factors for blood clots include: Surgery and hospitalization, prolonged immobility, cancer and some of its treatments, being overweight, smoking, and genetic or inherited clotting disorders.

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Why should healthy women be concerned about blood clots?

Women face blood clot risks throughout their lifetime that are connected to several life stages, including: family planning and birth control, pregnancy and childbirth, and the treatment of menopause symptoms with hormones later in life. [Learn more.](#)

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How does birth control factor into a woman's clotting risk?

Women should evaluate all of their clotting risks when selecting between hormonal and non-hormonal birth control options. Hormonal or estrogen-based birth control options can increase a woman's risk for blood clots. [Learn more.](#)

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What role does family health history play when evaluating clotting risk?

A family history of blood clots can indicate a genetic predisposition to clotting disorders. If a close relative (parent, sibling, or child) has experienced blood clots, the risk of developing them may be higher. [Learn more.](#)

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Can genetic testing help determine a woman's clotting risk?

Genetic testing involves analyzing DNA to identify specific genetic mutations that may increase the risk for blood clots. For those with a family history of blood clots or experiencing unexplained clots, genetic testing can provide valuable information. [Learn more.](#)

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How will I know if I have a blood clot?

Symptoms can vary, and not everyone will experience them, but the most common symptoms of blood clots include: difficulty breathing, coughing, coughing up blood, pain or swelling in the leg or arm, and the limb may be warm and discolored.

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Can blood clots be prevented?

You can reduce your risk for clotting by staying active, maintaining a healthy weight and balanced diet, and avoiding smoking. Understanding your risk factors and recognizing blood clot symptoms is the best way to prevent deadly clotting.

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What can women do to ensure their health and prevent clots?

Talk to your healthcare provider, consider all of your potential risk factors when selecting birth control options, planning a pregnancy, or considering treatment options for menopause symptoms. [Get more resources.](#)

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