

Patient information

Post Thrombotic Syndrome

What is Post thrombotic syndrome?

Post thrombotic syndrome also known as post phlebitic syndrome is a common and underappreciated complication of deep vein thrombosis.

It is a chronic and potentially disabling condition caused by the damage to the veins resulting in increased pressure on the walls of the vein, this pressure in turn damages the valves that usually help with keeping blood flowing up the leg.

A reduction in the amount of blood being carried away from the foot and lower leg can lead to pain, swelling and in severe cases some leg ulcers that can be slow to heal.

Who is likely to develop post thrombotic syndrome?

Up to approximately 30-40 in every 100 people who have had a deep vein thrombosis will develop post thrombotic syndrome within 5 years. You are more likely to develop post thrombotic syndrome if you have had more than one episode of deep vein thrombosis in the same leg.

How long does it take to develop symptoms of post thrombotic syndrome?

Most episodes of post thrombotic syndrome occur between 6 months to 2 years after a diagnosis of deep vein thrombosis.

What are the signs and symptoms for post thrombotic syndrome?

- Aching or cramping
- A feeling of heaviness in the limb
- Itching, tingling or pins and needles.
- Discolouration of the skin
- Hardening of the skin
- Development or worsening varicose veins
- Venous ulceration

- Leg swelling

You may experience one or more of these symptoms and they may vary in intensity. The pain, heaviness and swelling of the leg are usually worse after sitting or standing for long periods. This can usually be helped by walking as much as possible. Prolonged symptoms can also lead to depression, anxiety, and loss of confidence.

How to try to help prevent post thrombotic syndrome.

There are no real preventative measures that can be made to reduce developing post thrombotic syndrome other than to reduce your risk of deep vein thrombosis in the first place.

It may help to reduce the development of post thrombotic syndrome if you remain active, elevate your affected limb when sitting and remain well hydrated following your diagnosis of a deep vein thrombosis.

Treatments for post thrombotic syndrome.

There are no miracle cures for post thrombotic syndrome but there are several things that may help to ease your symptoms:

- Sitting with your leg elevated
- Wearing Grade 2 compression stockings (prescribed and properly measured)
- Take regular exercise
- Moisturise regularly - Avoid the skin on your legs drying out. Dry skin is more easily damaged.
- Lose weight- increased weight put extra strain on the veins in the leg.
- Take regular painkillers
- If you develop any broken areas on your lower leg, seek medical attention

There are no standardised medications that will help with the symptoms other than regular painkillers.

Other treatment options are available if standard treatments are not working and particularly if you develop a venous ulcer due to poor blood flow. It may be possible for your GP to refer you to the Vascular surgeons to see if there is anything that can be offered to help with your symptoms. However, this is not suitable for all patients with post thrombotic syndrome.

For further information you can access the Thrombosis UK website on www.thrombosisuk.org or feel free to contact the DVT clinic on **01284 713092** Mon – Sat 8am – 4pm.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities, please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)
<https://www.accessable.co.uk>



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