

# Deep vein thrombosis and its prevention

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After giving birth, women are at a slightly increased risk of developing blood clots in the veins in their legs. This risk is increased for roughly six weeks following birth.

On rare occasions, these blood clots can become very large and travel in the body to the lungs. This is known as pulmonary embolism (PE) and can be very serious.

## Signs/symptoms:

- pain/tenderness in the leg behind the knee or in the calf
- feeling of heat in the affected area or a red discolouration of the skin
- swelling of the affected area
- PE may cause shortness of breath and chest pain, which worsens with deep breaths, coughing or chest movement.

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**If you have any of these symptoms you should speak to a health professional immediately, or attend your local A&E department.**

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