



## What is Post Thrombotic Syndrome (PTS)?

Post Thrombotic Syndrome is a chronic condition that can happen after you have had a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) in the leg.

It is caused by damage to the valves in the veins, which normally prevents pooling of the blood in your legs.

Poor blood flow can lead to leg pain, swelling, skin breakdown, and leg ulcers.

Severe PTS can cause serious long term ill health and poor quality of life.

Find out more at:  
[www.ThrombosisBC.ca](http://www.ThrombosisBC.ca)

### How do I know if I have PTS? What are the symptoms?

- PTS is difficult to diagnose because it sometime looks like acute thrombosis.
- Symptoms can be mild, moderate or severe:
  - Heaviness
  - Pain
  - Cramps
  - Itchiness
  - Numbness or tingling
  - Swelling
  - Hardened or darkened patches of skin
  - Dilation of veins
  - Redness or thinning of the skin
  - Leg ulcers



Postthrombotic pigmentation



Healed skin ulcer and postthrombotic pigmentation



Chronic (left) leg swelling, skin hardening, and postthrombotic pigmentation

Images courtesy of Stephan Moll, MD  
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## How common is PTS and who is more likely to get it?

- Generally, 1 in 3 people who have had DVT in the leg will develop some symptoms of PTS within 5 years.
- Most cases of PTS will occur within 2 years of the thrombosis.
- People who have thrombosis more than once (*recurrent thrombosis*) have a higher risk of getting PTS.
- People who are overweight are also more prone to getting PTS.

## What are the treatments for PTS?

- There is no “cure” for PTS.
- Symptoms can be reduced with elastic compression stockings.
- Stockings might also help prevent the symptoms from getting worse, which may lead to leg ulcer formation.
- Some patients with circulation problems or skin problems cannot wear elastic stockings, so it is important to check with your doctor.
- Surgery does not help to reduce symptoms of PTS.

## Is there anything else I can do to reduce my risk or improve the symptoms of PTS?

- Exercise regularly
- Elevate your leg(s) while resting
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Avoid getting another blood clot

## What are graduated compression stockings? Do I need a prescription for them?

- These are stockings designed to give a higher pressure at the ankle than at the knee level to prevent pooling of blood.
- They come in different lengths, sizes and materials. Knee-high is the most common style.
- Stockings for PTS are available by prescription only. The ones you can buy without prescription don't have the same level of pressure and so are less effective.

## What is the proper way to wear the stockings?

- You must go to the pharmacy early in the morning to have your legs measured for proper fitting. If you go later in the day, your leg might be swollen so the fit will not be good.
- You should put your stockings on first thing in the morning and take them off before you go to bed.
- The stockings only work when you are wearing them, so it is best you wear them daily, especially when you are active.