



# Travel, Surgery and Deep Vein Thrombosis Risk

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## Definition

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot (also known as a thrombosis) that forms in a deep vein, most commonly in your leg or pelvis which can cause pain and swelling. If a clot becomes dislodged and passes through your blood vessels it can reach your lungs, this is called a pulmonary embolism which can cause breathlessness. Deep Vein Thrombosis is treated with blood thinning medications. Although rare, they can be fatal.

## Risks

The risk of DVT within the general population is 1:1000. This risk is increased with long journeys (more than 4 hours), particularly flying. The evidence is less conclusive for shorter journeys and flights but if you are at high risk it would be worth taking precautions.

***Recent surgery further increases the risk.***

Other risks include

- History of DVT or PE
- Obesity
- Limited mobility
- Over 60 years of age

## Travel advice before and after surgery

You should avoid long-haul travel for 4 weeks either side of your surgery.

Inform your surgeon of your travel plans.

Travel socks may be advised for long journeys 1-2 months after surgery.

During long journeys you should;

- Regularly circle your feet and stretch your legs
- Take short, regular walks
- Drink plenty of water
- Avoid alcohol
- Avoid restrictive clothing

***Always inform your travel company about your recent surgery.***

## For further information, visit:

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

[www.roh.nhs.uk](http://www.roh.nhs.uk)