

Post thrombotic syndrome (PTS)

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This is a common problem for people who have suffered a Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT). It is likely to affect up to half of patients within 2 years of diagnosis, although for some patients it can take up to 20 years for symptoms to develop.

PTS is caused by damage after a clot in the valves and veins in your leg. This means that blood does not flow freely up the affected vein. Blood flow is diverted to other smaller veins and to the surrounding tissues in your calf to compensate. This increases pressure in the surrounding veins.

What are the symptoms of PTS?

Some or all of these symptoms can occur in the affected leg:

- Long term pain
- Continued or intermittent swelling
- Aching
- Cramp
- Itching
- Numbness
- Hardened or dark patches of skin
- Leg ulcers

If you develop any of these symptoms, you should discuss them with your GP, you may need a referral for vascular studies.

How can I prevent PTS?

Elastic stockings increase compression at the ankle and improve the blood circulation up the leg, this helps the valves inside your veins to work efficiently, and prevents more damage from occurring. They can be used to relieve troubling symptoms of a DVT, e.g. swelling, pain, and hardness of the calf.

Are there any alternative treatments?

In certain circumstances some patients are not suitable for a stocking. We will inform you if this is the case.

It is important to note that there is no alternative treatment available at present that we can use.

What are the benefits?

The benefits of wearing stockings are a reduction in swelling, and increased comfort in the majority of users. A knee length stocking is usually preferred due to ease of use.

Where can I get stockings?

If you need to wear a stocking for comfort, we will give you the first stocking at the DVT clinic on diagnosis. The dark green stockings we supply you with are liable to start slipping down your leg once you become more mobile. Once the swelling in your leg has settled, your GP can review your need for a further stocking if required. Stockings should be replaced every 3-6 months.

If for any reason we cannot find a stocking to fit you at our clinic, it is important that you go to your GP as soon as possible to have one prescribed. In some cases your stockings will be need to be made to measure.

Your GP will prescribe Class 2 or Class 3 British Standard below knee stockings, depending on the compression and comfort required. Class 3 is the recommended compression, but Class 2 can be used in certain circumstances, e.g. if Class 3 is too constricting or difficult to put on. In order that the correct size stocking can be given to you, your pharmacist or practice nurse will measure your leg, or give you a form to fill in with the measurements to be taken at home.

Wear the stocking during the day, take it off at night. You only need to wear it on the affected leg. However many people choose to wear them on both legs for comfort and aesthetic reasons.

Compression stockings can also be obtained from most large pharmacies, should you choose to wear one after the recommended time.

Further Information and Advice can be obtained from the VTE Service on [01273 696955 Ext. 64217](tel:01273696955) or [bleep 8177](tel:01273696955), Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm, excluding Bank Holidays.

If you have vision, mobility or access issues please contact [01273 696955 Ext. 64217](tel:01273696955) for further advice / information.

This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton & Hove or Haywards Heath

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