

Blood Clots are when blood which thickens or masses or lumps together and stops circulation.

What to look for

Our blood clots as part of a normal, healthy protective process however if any of the symptoms below occur blood clotting may be the cause...

- Unexpected and remote pain in an arm or leg which can also include pins and needles sensation, numbness, or a cold feeling below the pain. Gangrene (tissue death) may occur if this is not seen to and treated.
- A hard, bluish lump in a vein.
- Sudden blindness in one eye may be due to a blood clot blocking a retinal artery.
- Violent dizziness, or vertigo, that impairs your ability to stand or walk may be caused by a small blood clot blocking a cerebral artery.

Our blood flows normally and freely through our veins and arteries and will clot as a normal, healthy defensive process. This is how any bleeding is stopped and our healing can begin.

It is desirable, even vital, when a blood vessel is injured, but clot formation inside a healthy blood vessel is not normal and can be fatal. These types of clotting can indicate heart disease or venous diseases such as phlebitis.

A clot that forms in the heart, blood vessel or vein and blocks circulation is called a thrombus. Tiny thrombi develop on blood vessel walls to heal minute injuries, then normally dissolve. If they don't dissolve, they tend to slow the circulation and flow with the blood.

When thrombosis occurs in one of the coronary arteries of the heart, a patient has a heart attack. If it occurs in the brain the patient has a stroke, in the leg vein can cause phlebitis and if it occurs in the artery supplying a limb, gangrene may be the result.

Causes

Abnormal clotting results usually from one of the following - coronary heart disease, artery disease, prolonged immobilisation in which the blood clots because of poor circulation, after major surgery, pregnancy, taking the contraceptive pill, or it may be associated with cancer.

Some individuals however may be more susceptible to this condition than others in which their blood clots more readily and easily than others.

Blood will coagulate inside blood vessels if vessel walls are damaged or if circulation becomes unusually sluggish, as in atherosclerosis.

Traditional Treatment

Your doctor should prescribe drugs to help with this condition as well as aspirin. Blood clots may be removed during another heart operation but surgery to remove blood clots is rare and only performed in severe cases.

Alternative/Natural Treatments

Always inform your doctor before starting any other herbal remedies to ensure they will not interfere with your prescribed medication.

Body/Mind - Massage may be very helpful if the blood clot is due to poor circulation. This should always be performed by a trained professional

Herbal Therapies - Cayenne and ginkgo, Turmeric, bilberry, ginger, grape-skin extract, and guggulipid, an extract of myrrh, Garlic and onion, as is bromelain, a pineapple enzyme.

Dietary Considerations

Eat more oily fish such as tuna and sardines, fresh fruit and vegetables, fibre filtered water. Certain vitamins and minerals may also act as natural anticoagulants. Ask for advice about supplemental vitamin E and magnesium to prevent abnormal clots from forming.

Prevention

- Stick to the above recommended dietary lifestyle
- Try to stay within your recommended weight range by exercising regularly and carefully.
- Some doctors recommend daily doses of aspirin for patients at risk of abnormal clotting. But always do this under supervision of your doctor.
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When to seek further professional advice

- you have angina or have any symptoms associated with stroke.
- you experience sensory impairment.