When you are being tested for a blood clot
In a vein of your leg or calf

CHUM

Your doctor has asked you to have tests because you may have a clot that is blocking your blood flow. This fact sheet gives you information about what is happening to you and what to watch for while waiting for your test results.

Why do I need these tests?

Your doctor thinks a blood clot is partially or completely blocking a deep vein. This clot is blocking your blood flow. This is called deep vein thrombosis.

The most common signs in the affected area (usually the calf or thigh) are:

– pain
– heat
– swelling and redness

What causes this problem?

This is due to poor blood circulation, which can be due to various causes such as:

– an injury
– an operation
– a stay in hospital
– an infection
– etc.

What is the most serious complication?

Most blood clots eventually dissolve on their own and are eliminated. However, sometimes the clot moves to the lungs. There it can block blood flow to the lungs. This is called pulmonary embolism. It is a problem that can be serious and cause various disorders (see symptoms to watch for, page 2).

What are the tests for?

The tests will show if you really have deep vein thrombosis and, if so, where exactly it is. This will help in deciding on the best treatment and starting it as soon as possible.

What symptoms should I be watching for?

The tests and consultations can take several days. In the meantime, go to the emergency room right away if you have any of the following symptoms:

– Your pulse (heartbeat) is more than 100 beats per minute (60 seconds). To measure it, put your thumb and index finger on each side of your throat and count the number of beats you feel in your fingers for 15 seconds. Multiply this number by 4 to get the number of beats per minute. If you prefer, you can also count for 60 seconds.

– You're out of breath while resting, or you're breathing faster.

– You have pain that appears suddenly when you inhale or cough.

– You feel dizzy and weak.

– You have a fever, with a temperature above 38.5°C (101.3°F) taken by mouth.

– You see blood in your spit, urine, vomit, or stool (red or black blood).

– Your affected limb hurts more, or is much more swollen, than when the nurse examined you.

## What can I do to make my tests go more smoothly?

To make sure your follow-up goes well:

– Go to all your tests and consultations.

– Arrive at least 20 minutes early.

– Use the checklist on the next page.

After you have completed all your tests, you'll see a doctor who specializes in circulatory (vascular) medicine.

What precautions should I take while waiting for my consultation?

– Rest and don't do any physical exercise that puts a strain on your legs (jogging, cycling).

– Raise the affected limb above heart level when you are sitting. This will reduce swelling.

– Don't massage the area that is painful or swollen.

– Don't wear socks or tight clothing. This can interfere with blood flow.

– Don't take aspirin or anti-inflammatory medicines. If you're in pain, take an acetaminophen type of pain reliever (such as Tylenol). If in doubt, ask your pharmacist for advice.
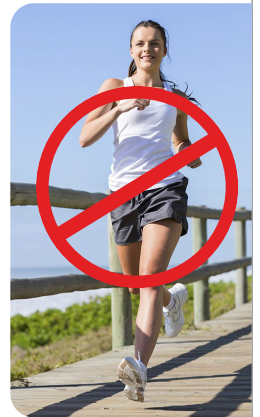
Who can I contact for help or to ask questions?

For any question related to your health, you can call a nurse at the Health Patient CHUM Hotline (ligne Santé Patient CHUM).

> **514 890-8086**

This service is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. When calling, be sure to have your health insurance card on hand.

MY APPOINTMENTS

APPOINTMENTS	LOCATION	DETAILS	DATE	TIME
Blood tests				
Ultrasound to look at blood vessels and blood flow				
Consultation in vascular medicine				

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Questions

Resource people and contacts

USEFUL RESOURCES

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.

You can also find them on our website
chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante

The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
chumontreal.qc.ca