

Deep Vein Thrombosis

Support hosiery comes in a wide range of sizes, strengths and colours to choose from and everything from spider veins to the risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) may be alleviated and even prevented.

DVT is a worrying condition which develops during long periods of travel such as long-distance driving or flights of several hours duration. Medical conditions, which affect blood clotting, are another major factor. In approximately 50 percent of all cases of DVT, there are no noticeable symptoms. When symptoms occur they include: swelling especially in the feet and ankles;

pain which often starts in the calf muscle as a cramp; the affected area feels warm, and skin changes such as pale red or blue.

PTA: Hello. How may I help you?
A friend of mine told me that you stock compression tights and stockings here at the pharmacy.

Oh, are you intending going on a long journey?

Yes, a group of us are attending a conference in Singapore, and as it's such a long haul, I thought it would be a good idea to get some information and advice on compression tights.

Well, I wouldn't recommend tights but stockings, as the area that is most affected is from below the rear of the knee to the sole of the foot. Sitting for long periods is one of the main causes of deep vein thrombosis. Isn't that dangerous?

Certainly! You see, when you are sitting for a long time, especially in the cramped conditions of an airplane, the blood can't get pumped as it normally would by walking around.

What happens then?

There is a risk of the blood clotting in the lower limbs. In the least painful case, a clot may

dislodge and cause a pulmonary embolism to travel to the lungs and put pressure on them and the heart. In the worst case, if the clot is large it may travel to the heart and lungs, block blood flow and cause sudden death.

My goodness! I didn't know that!

Don't worry, such instances are very seldom. It does sound dramatic and it is but there are other things aside from wearing flight compression socks that can counteract the symptoms ever occurring.

Such as?

Such as getting enough hydration, that is, by drinking non-alcoholic and non-caffeine drinks. It's essential to get your legs moving, that is, relaxation and compression of the leg muscles that get your blood pumping. So, you should take every opportunity to get up and walk around. If that's not always possible you can do a few exercises in your seat. For example you can move your legs and especially your ankles in a clockwise and then in a counter-clockwise direction.

Why didn't I think of that!

That's what we're here for! So, what's your shoe size?

I usually take a 6 and a half.

That's size 40 in Germany. These socks here provide a compression level of 14-17 mmHg at the ankle, which should be more than sufficient for your flight.

Thank you. You're very knowledgeable. Goodbye.

Goodbye. ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

VOCABULARY

Deep Vein Thrombosis	tiefe Venenthrombose
support	Stütz-
hosiery	Strumpfware
spider veins	Besenreiser
strengths	Stärken
alleviate	erleichtern, verringern
requirements	Bedarf, Bedürfnisse
clots	Gerinnsel
noticeable	bemerkbar
occur	auftreten
ankles	Fußknöchel
calf muscle	Wadenmuskel
pale	bläss
tights	Strumpfhose
stockings	Strümpfe
long haul	(ugs.) Lang-, Fernstrecke
rear	Hinter-, rückwärtig
lower limbs	untere Extremitäten
dislodge	sich von der Stelle entfernen
pulmonary embolism	Lungenembolie
clockwise	im Uhrzeigersinn
knowledgeable	sachkundig