

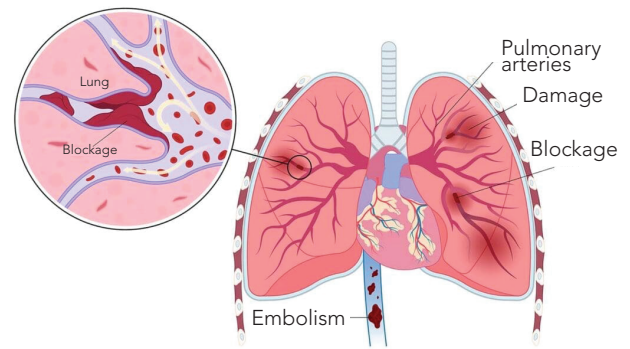
PULMONARY EMBOLISM (PE) AWARENESS

Understanding a Serious Condition That Needs Fast Action

A Pulmonary Embolism (PE) occurs when a blood clot travels to the lungs and blocks a blood vessel. It can happen suddenly and may be life-threatening if not treated quickly. Knowing the warning signs, risk factors, and when to seek medical help can save your life — or someone else's.

What Is a Pulmonary Embolism?

A Pulmonary Embolism is usually caused by a blood clot that forms in the deep veins of the legs (a condition called deep vein thrombosis, or DVT) and then travels to the lungs. This blocks normal blood flow and reduces oxygen in the body.

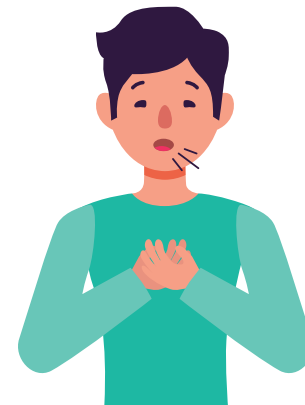


Recognise the Symptoms — Act Fast

PE symptoms can appear suddenly or develop over hours. Seek immediate medical attention (call 911) if you experience:

- Sudden shortness of breath, even at rest
- Sharp chest pain that worsens when breathing deeply or coughing
- Rapid heart rate or palpitations
- Coughing up blood (haemoptysis)
- Feeling lightheaded, dizzy, or fainting
- Sudden unexplained anxiety or sweating.

If you have these symptoms and any risk factors for clots, treat it as an emergency.



Shortness of Breath

Know the Risk Factors

Anyone can develop a Pulmonary Embolism, but your risk increases with:

- Recent surgery or hospital stay (especially involving legs, hips, or abdomen)
- Prolonged immobility — long flights, car journeys, or bed rest
- A history of DVT or PE
- Family history of blood clots
- Pregnancy or recent childbirth
- The use of oestrogen-based medications (like the pill or hormone replacement therapy)
- Cancer or cancer treatment
- Smoking
- Obesity
- Heart disease or clotting disorders.



Spot the Signs of Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)

Because most Pulmonary Embolisms start as DVTs, recognising these early can prevent a serious emergency. See your doctor if you notice:

- Pain, tenderness, or swelling in one leg (usually the calf or thigh)
- Warmth, redness, or discolouration of the skin
- The leg feeling heavy or tight.

Do not massage the leg. Seek medical advice.

How to Reduce Your Risk

- Stay active and move often — avoid sitting still for long periods.
- Stay hydrated — dehydration can increase clot risk.
- Wear compression stockings if recommended by your doctor.
- Take blood-thinning medication exactly as prescribed after surgery or hospitalisation.
- Maintain a healthy weight and stop smoking.
- Discuss your personal risk factors with your GP, especially before surgery, pregnancy, or long travel.

When to Seek Emergency Care

Call 911 immediately if you:

- Experience sudden, unexplained shortness of breath
- Have chest pain that gets worse when breathing
- Are coughing up blood
- Have light-headedness or fainting.

If you've had a recent DVT, surgery, or immobility and develop any of these symptoms, don't wait. Early treatment saves lives.

FAQs

Some Common Questions about Pulmonary Embolism (PE) Awareness

Q: Can a Pulmonary Embolism be prevented?

A: Yes. Staying active, hydrated, and following medical advice after surgery or travel can significantly reduce your risk.

Q: How is a PE treated?

A: A PE is usually treated with blood-thinning medication to stop new clots forming and help the body dissolve existing ones. Severe cases may need hospital care or specialist treatment.

Q: Can young, healthy people get a PE?

A: Yes. Although it's less common, young, healthy people can get a PE. Risk rises with inactivity, hormone use, smoking, or long travel.