



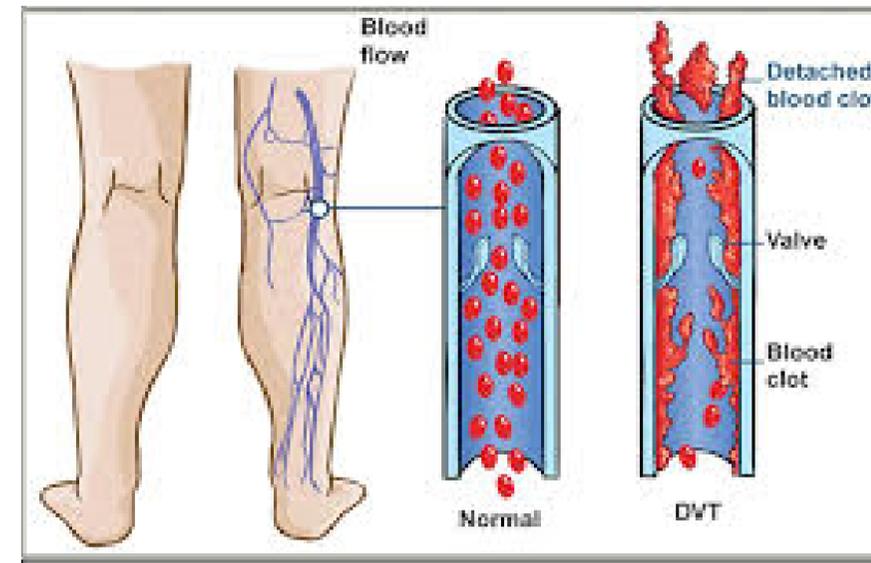
## Dr Nighat Arif

March is national Deep-Vein Thrombosis Awareness Month, a public health initiative aimed at raising awareness of this commonly occurring medical condition where blood clots form in the legs and potentially cause fatal complications, such as **pulmonary embolism** or strokes. The tennis star Serena Williams revealed that she suffered from multiple lungs blood clots after giving birth to her daughter last year and was given life-saving blood thinning medication.

Every year in the UK, about **one in 1,000** people get a DVT. So here are some facts to put you in the know. Research has shown that seeking help early is important to prevent a fatal complication.

There are two types of veins: **deep** and **superficial**. Deep veins are large and surrounded by muscle in the centre of a limb. DVT occurs when a thrombus (blood clot) forms in the deep vein, most often in the leg, resulting in partially or completely blocked circulation.

# Deep Vein Thrombosis Awareness Month



Symptoms of DVT can include swelling, pain, discoloration and abnormally hot skin at the affected area. Unfortunately, nearly half of DVT episodes have minimal, if any, symptoms. These **“silent”** afflictions are particularly worrisome. Adding to the complication, some conditions such as muscle strain, skin infection, phlebitis (inflammation of veins) have similar symptoms, making DVT harder to diagnose. The most accurate ways to diagnose DVT is through **venous ultrasound scan**. DVT below the knee is unlikely to cause serious complications, clots above the knee can break off and travel up the bloodstream, resulting in a **blocked blood vessel** in the lung (pulmonary embolism). Other consequences are damaged blood vessels leading to blood pooling, swelling and pain in the leg, and in the most severe cases with large clots, death.

Certain individuals are more at risk for deep-vein thrombosis than others. You are at greater risk if:

- you've had DVT before
- you're over 60
- you're a smoker
- you're very overweight (obese)
- you're dehydrated (not getting enough fluid)
- you have a severe infection
- Women taking oestrogen
- Pregnancy
- Recent surgery
- Immobility
- Have a diagnosis of cancer

It is important to take extra precaution if you are travelling on long haul flights. Make sure you are hydrated. Take regular walking breaks and wear flight stockings.

The treatment for DVT is by taking blood thinning medication.

**For further advice and information please come and see one of our GP's at the surgery.**