

Percutaneous mechanical thrombectomy for acute deep vein thrombosis of the leg

Information for the public

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A deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot in the leg. An acute DVT has only been there for a couple of weeks (a chronic DVT will have been there for more than a couple of weeks). It may be an iliofemoral type or a distal type. An iliofemoral DVT is in a vein near the top of the leg. A distal DVT is in a vein lower down the leg.

This procedure can be used for an iliofemoral DVT, but only when patients are having regular checks to see how well it is working or if it has caused problems. This is because there is not enough evidence to be sure how well it works.

This procedure can also be used for a distal DVT, but only if it is done as part of a research study. This is because there is less evidence about how well it works for this type of DVT.

A DVT in a leg is usually treated with anticoagulant drugs, which stop further clotting but do not dissolve the clot. It can be dissolved using clot-busting drugs but these can cause serious bleeding. In this procedure, the clot is broken up and sucked out using a mechanical device. This is introduced through a tube inserted into the vein through the skin (percutaneous). The aim is to reduce symptoms and prevent long-term problems such as swelling of the leg and ulceration.

The [NHS website](#) may be a good place to find out more. NICE's information on [interventional procedures guidance](#) has more about what a procedure is and how we assess them.

Is this procedure right for me?

If you've been offered this procedure, your healthcare professionals should discuss with you what is involved, and explain the research study, and tell you about the risks and benefits. They should talk with you about your options, and listen carefully to your views and concerns. Your family can be involved too, if you wish. All of this should happen before you agree (consent) to have the procedure and to be in the study. You should also be told how to find more information about the procedure. Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

Some questions to think about

- What does the procedure involve?
- What are the possible benefits? How likely am I to get them?
- What are the risks or side effects? How likely are they?
- What happens if the procedure doesn't work or something goes wrong?
- What happens if I don't want the procedure? Are there other treatments available?

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