

# VTE: When Preventable Blood Clots Become Deadly

## What is VTE?

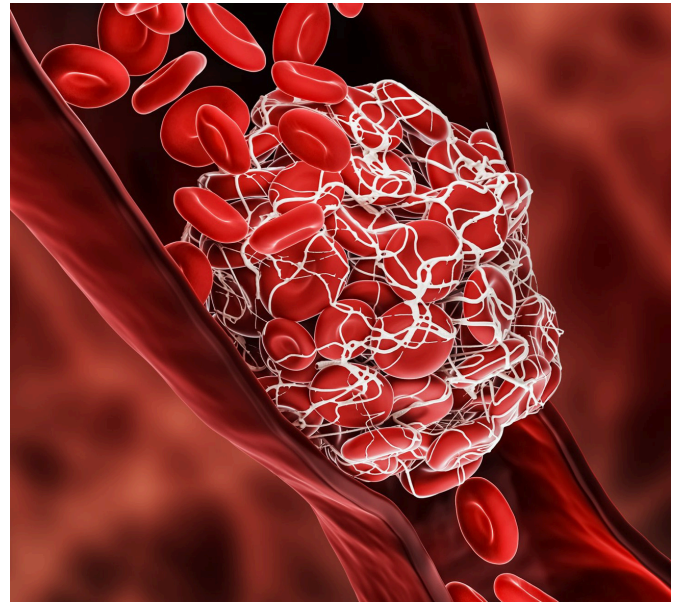
**Venous thromboembolism (VTE) refers to blood clots in the veins**, which can block vital blood flow. It includes both **deep vein thrombosis (DVT)**, a clot in the deep veins, most commonly in the legs, and **pulmonary embolism (PE)**, a clot in the lungs. **VTE can affect anyone**, regardless of age, gender or fitness level, and can lead to serious illness, disability, and in some cases, death.

Even world-class athletes have suffered from career-threatening episodes of DVT, **including No. 1 NBA draft pick Victor Wembanyama, nine-time NBA All-Star Damian Lillard, and tennis legend Serena Williams**, with Williams experiencing a life-threatening pulmonary embolism after her pregnancy.

The risk of VTE increases during or after hospitalization, cancer treatment, pregnancy, and with factors like vein injury, limited movement, chronic illness, older age, family history, and high estrogen levels. **Nearly a million people in the United States are affected by VTE each year**, and many do not experience noticeable symptoms until complications develop.

### VTE Fast Facts:

- About **half of people with DVT have no symptoms**.
- About **30% of people who have had a DVT or PE are at risk for another episode**.
- **1 in 3 DVT survivors develop long-term complications** such as post-thrombotic syndrome (PTS), which can cause pain, swelling, and skin changes in the affected limb.
- **PE is one of the most common causes of pregnancy-related death**. Women are 5x more likely to experience a VTE during pregnancy, childbirth, or postpartum.



## Interventional Cardiologists Specialize in Treating Blood Clots

- ICs specialize in minimally invasive procedures that remove or break up blood clots.
- ICs offer advanced treatments, such as catheter-directed thrombolysis (CDT) and mechanical thrombectomy, that enable targeted clot removal, reduced hospitalization time, and improved outcomes.
- Early, minimally invasive diagnosis and treatment from an IC reduces risk, chronic issues, and disability.

Yet, many Americans cannot access effective interventional treatments for fatal VTE due to insurance restrictions and Medicare coverage gaps, delaying care and leading to worse outcomes and higher healthcare costs.

Information and statistics are sourced from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).