

# Blood clots in deep veins and the Combined Oral Contraceptive pill (COC)

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**Blood clots in the deep veins are rare for women who take the COC pill as long as there are no other health risks.**

## What is a blood clot?

A clot usually happens in a deep vein of the leg causing a blockage in the vein. The clot can break off and travel to the lungs. This is known as a pulmonary embolus and is much more serious. Most women recover from having a clot, some have on-going health problems and a very small number may die.

## Who can get a blood clot?

Blood clots can happen to anyone, but they are less common if you are young and healthy – about 3 per 100,000 women each year.

If you are pregnant, have a close family member who has had a blood clot, are overweight or smoke, you may be more at risk of having a blood clot.

There are also temporary risks such as long travel and not being able to move around after an injury or after an operation. Severe varicose veins, cancer, some blood disorders and some other health problems can also increase your risk of having clots in your veins.

## What are the symptoms of a blood clot?

The symptoms of a blood clot in the leg are swelling, tenderness and pain, but a blood clot may occur without symptoms. Breathlessness and sharp chest pain can occur with a blood clot in the lungs. These symptoms can occur for other reasons.

## What should I do if there is a change in my health or temporary risk factor or anyone in my family has a clot while I am on the pill?

You should tell your nurse or doctor as soon as possible as it may be safer for you to use a different type of contraception.

## Which COC pill could I take?

<b>Ava 30, Ava 20, Norimin, Brevinor-1</b> Levlen, Loette, Microgynon 20, Monofeme, Nordette	Small risk of having a clot if there are no other risks. These are probably the safest COCs They have 3-4 times the risk compared to not using the pill
Mercilon, Marvelon, Minulet, Yaz, Yasmin	Have a slightly higher risk of having a clot than the pills above. About 6 times the risk
<b>Ginet</b> Microgynon 50	These pills probably have the highest risk for having a clot About 8 times the risk

## What are my other options?

Progestogen only contraception such as the progestogen only pill (Noriday or Cerazette), Depo Provera, Jadelle implant or Mirena IUS.

Non hormonal contraception such as a copper IUD or condoms (with the emergency pill).

For more information about Family Planning resources, clinics and health promotion services go to our website, [familyplanning.org.nz](http://familyplanning.org.nz)