

# My heavy legs appointment questions

Questions about heavy legs, what comes with the feeling and your health background to answer before your visit and take with you. Write your answers on the lines. This sheet stays with you; nothing is sent anywhere.

**Safety first.** Call 911 for severe chest pain or pressure, severe shortness of breath, suddenly not being able to speak, see, walk or move, or suddenly being weak or drooping on one side of the body. If leg swelling comes with shortness of breath, or with chest pain that feels like pressure or tightness, MedlinePlus says to call 911. Difficulty breathing, or chest pain or discomfort that gets worse with a deep breath or coughing, can be signs of a blood clot in the lungs (pulmonary embolism), which CDC says needs immediate medical attention. Do not wait for a routine callback from your provider: go to an emergency department or call 911 or your local emergency number for help. Call your healthcare provider right away for a swollen, tender leg that is painful to the touch, which can be a sign of a blood clot in a deep vein (deep vein thrombosis); CDC says this needs prompt medical attention. This sheet is general education. It cannot tell you what is causing the heaviness, and it is not a reason to start, stop or change a medicine or to begin wearing compression stockings on your own.

## How the heaviness feels and when

1. Which words describe it most closely: heavy, tired, full, tight, aching, cramping, weak, numb or tingling?

2. Is it in one leg or both, and where: feet, ankles, calves, thighs or the whole leg?

3. When did it start, did it come on suddenly or slowly, and is it getting worse?

4. Is it worse after sitting or standing for a long time, and does it ease when I lie down or raise my legs?

5. Does it come on when I walk or climb stairs and go away when I rest?

6. Does it get worse when I stand or walk and ease when I sit down or lean forward?

7. Is it worse in the morning or in the evening?

## What comes with it

8. Have I noticed swelling in my feet, ankles or legs, or one leg looking larger than the other?

9. Have I noticed bulging veins, skin color changes, itching, or a sore that is slow to heal?

10. Does one foot feel colder than the other, or have I noticed numbness, tingling or pins and needles?

11. Does my leg actually feel weaker, or is it harder to walk or keep my balance?

12. Have I been short of breath with everyday activities, unusually tired, or noticed weight gain?

13. Do I have back pain, or pain that spreads from my lower back or buttocks into my legs?

## My health background

14. Which health conditions do I have, such as heart disease, kidney disease, liver disease or diabetes?

---

15. Have I had cancer treatment, lymph node surgery or radiation therapy?

---

16. Have I recently had surgery, an injury, an infection, a hospital stay, a long trip or a long stretch of not moving much?

---

17. Have I had a blood clot, or has anyone in my family had one?

---

18. Do I smoke now, or did I smoke in the past?

---

19. Am I pregnant, or have I given birth recently?

---

20. Did the heaviness start after I began or changed a medicine?

---

## Questions to ask my clinician

21. Could the heaviness be coming from my veins, arteries, lymph system, heart, kidneys, nerves, muscles or a medicine, and how will we find out?

---

22. Do I need any tests, and what will each one show?

---

23. Should I see a specialist, and which kind?

---

24. Is compression right for me, and is there any reason I should not use it?

---

25. Is there anything I should change or watch for while we work out the cause?

---

26. Which changes mean I should call you right away or get emergency care?

---

## Bring to your appointment

- This sheet with your answers
- A list of every medicine and supplement you take, including any recent changes
- The names of other clinicians you see about your legs, heart or circulation
- Reports from any earlier leg, heart or blood tests, if you have them

## My notes

---

## Sources

NHLBI: Varicose veins; Peripheral artery disease symptoms and diagnosis; Heart failure symptoms; Venous thromboembolism ([nhlbi.nih.gov](http://nhlbi.nih.gov)). MedlinePlus: Foot, leg, and ankle swelling; Venous insufficiency; Leg pain; Weakness; When to use the emergency room ([medlineplus.gov](http://medlineplus.gov)). National Cancer Institute: Lymphedema and cancer ([cancer.gov](http://cancer.gov)). NIAMS: Spinal stenosis ([niams.nih.gov](http://niams.nih.gov)). CDC: About venous thromboembolism (blood clots) ([cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)). Your clinician decides which questions, tests and next steps apply to you.

From the Cardio Guardian Editorial Team. Online version: [getcardioguardian.com/insights/feeling-my-legs-heavy/](http://getcardioguardian.com/insights/feeling-my-legs-heavy/)