

My vein pain behind the knee appointment questions

Questions about when the pain started, swelling and other changes, 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. NHLBI says to call 911 if you see any bleeding from varicose veins. Call your healthcare provider right away for swelling, pain or tenderness, warmth, or red or discolored skin in a leg, which can be signs 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 pain, and it is not a reason to massage or exercise the leg, test yourself at home, or start, stop or change a medicine on your own.

When and how the pain started

1. When did the pain behind my knee start, and did it come on suddenly or slowly?

2. Did it start after an injury, a fall, exercise or a twist of the knee?

3. Where exactly is the pain: behind the knee only, in the calf below it, or along a vein I can see or feel?

4. Which words describe it most closely: aching, cramping, throbbing, tight, burning or sharp?

5. Is it getting worse, staying the same, or coming and going?

Swelling and other changes

6. Is there swelling behind my knee, in my calf or in my whole leg, and is it in one leg or both?

7. Is the skin red, warm, bruised or a different color, or can I feel a tender cord under the skin?

8. Do I have bulging, twisted veins near the sore area?

9. Is there a lump behind my knee, and has it changed in size?

10. Does my knee catch, lock or buckle, or is it hard to bend, straighten or put weight on?

11. Have I noticed numbness, tingling, or a pale, cold or bluish calf or foot?

Recent events and my health background

12. Have I recently had surgery, a broken bone, a hospital stay, bed rest or a long trip?

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

14. Do I have arthritis, gout or an earlier knee injury?

15. Am I pregnant, or have I given birth in the last 6 months?

16. Do I take estrogen or birth control pills, and do I smoke?

17. Have I had cancer or cancer treatment?

18. Which medicines do I take, and have any changed recently?

Questions to ask my clinician

19. What do you think is causing the pain, and what else could it be?

20. Do I need an ultrasound or any other test, and what will each one show?

21. If it is not a clot, what is the next step?

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

23. Is there anything I should avoid doing with this leg until we know the cause?

24. 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
- Dates of any recent surgery, injury, hospital stay or long trip
- Reports from any earlier leg ultrasound, knee imaging or blood tests, if you have them

My notes

Sources

MedlinePlus: When to use the emergency room; Foot, leg, and ankle swelling; Deep vein thrombosis; Baker cyst; Thrombophlebitis; Knee pain (medlineplus.gov). CDC: About venous thromboembolism (blood clots) (cdc.gov). NHLBI: Varicose veins; Deep vein thrombosis; Venous thromboembolism causes and risk factors; Venous thromboembolism diagnosis (nhlbi.nih.gov). StatPearls: Popliteal vein; Baker's cyst (NCBI Bookshelf). Your clinician decides which questions, tests and next steps apply to you.

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