



# VTE Signs and Symptoms for Patients with Mobility Impairments

Patients with mobility impairments are at risk for Venous Thromboembolism (VTE). As a primary care provider, it is important to identify the potential signs and symptoms of Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) and Pulmonary Embolism (PE) among patients with mobility impairments.



## Signs and Symptoms for DVT

- Swelling of Limbs**  
One-sided, atypical edema in the limbs
- Pain or Tenderness**  
Myalgia described as a cramp or Charley horse and is NOT associated with functional limitations affecting mobility presented by patient
- Skin Discoloration**  
Abnormal skin pigmentation or erythema
- Warm to Touch**  
Affected limb may be inflamed; patients with functional limitations may experience reduced feeling or sensation, requiring diligence from the provider to notice inflammation in limbs

## Signs and Symptoms for PE

- Sudden Shortness of Breath**  
Complaint of dyspnea unrelated to a chronic condition or functional limitation
- Chest Pain**  
Complaint of angina, worsened by breathing
- Rapid Heart Rate**  
Abnormal tachycardia not attributed to stress or activity
- Unexplained Cough**  
Patients may experience an unexplained cough, sometimes with phlegm or bloody mucus

It is important to diagnose potential VTE incidences as soon as possible. Patients with mobility impairments presenting with signs and symptoms may require immediate treatment. Patients with mobility impairments are often “experts” on their disability experience and should be taken seriously when describing these signs and symptoms outside the context of their disabilities.

\*Source: VTE Integrative Knowledge Translation Panel

Daunov, M. et al. (2019). Prevalence of Venous Thromboembolism in Ambulatory and Non-ambulatory Patients with Cerebral Palsy. *Blood*, 134 (Supplement 1).

CDC (2020). What is Venous Thromboembolism?

CDC (2020). Disability Impacts All of Us

Support provided by: Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation. This content is for informational purposes only. Always seek the advice of qualified health providers with questions regarding medical conditions or treatments. More information at: <https://aahd.us/dissemination/blood-clot-knowledge-translation-research-project/>