

Patient information

Superficial Thrombophlebitis

Haematology Liverpool

What is this booklet for?

This booklet has been given to you because you have been diagnosed with a superficial Thrombophlebitis (STP)

Contents of this booklet

- What is Superficial Thrombophlebitis?
- What is the treatment of Superficial Thrombophlebitis?
- Other frequently asked questions.

What is Superficial Thrombophlebitis (STP)?

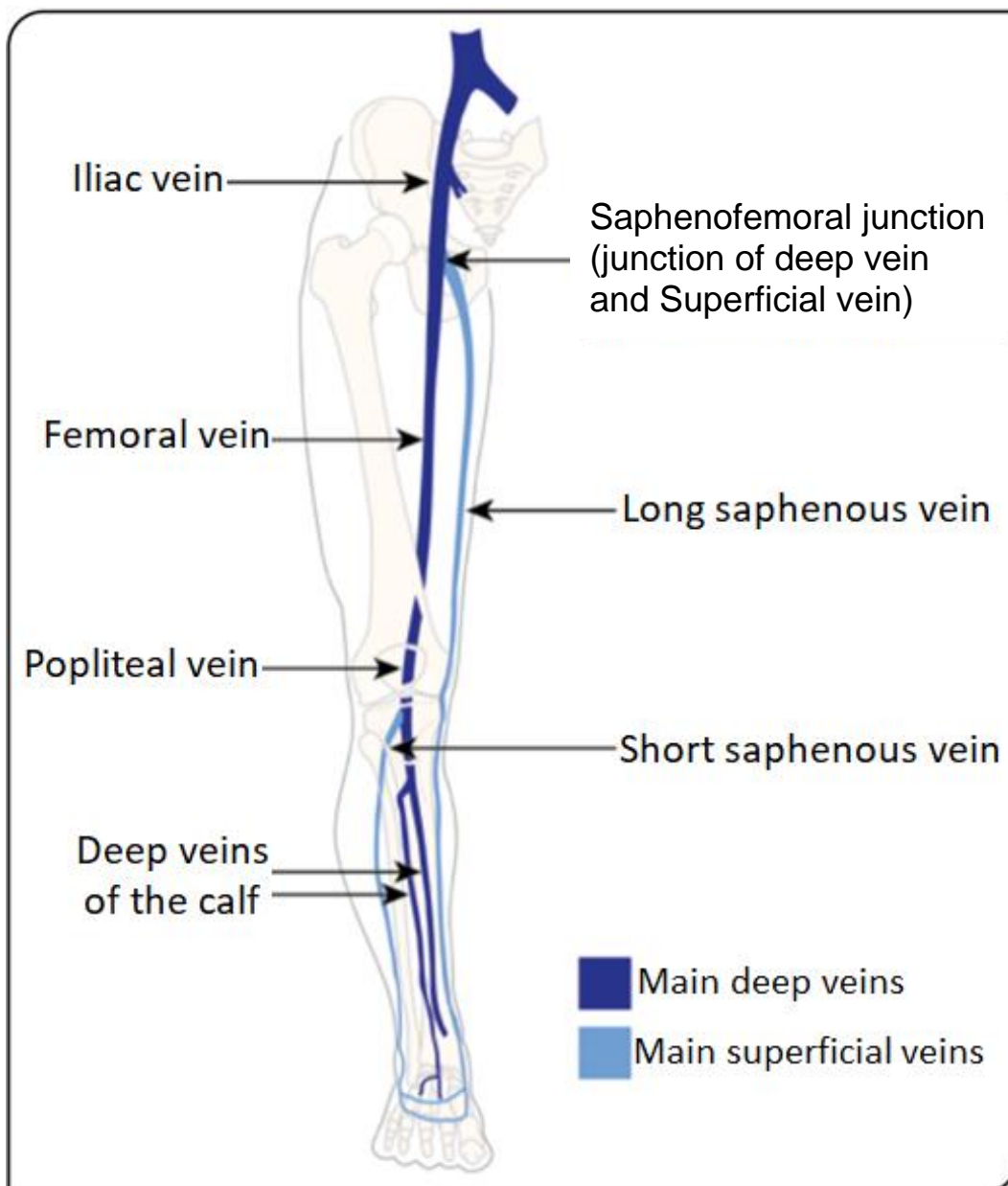
STP is a common disorder which occurs when a shallow, or superficial vein- usually the saphenous vein of the leg or smaller vein lading off this, becomes inflamed, swollen and painful.

Thrombo(sis) means a blood clot while phlebitis is the inflammation of a vein.

This may occur with no obvious cause, but some conditions (risk factors) can make it more likely.

Risk factors:

- Varicose veins.
- Previous STP or deep vein thrombosis.
- Being over weight.
- Long periods of immobility.
- Smoking.
- Pregnancy and up to six weeks post-delivery.



What is the treatment of Superficial Thrombophlebitis?

Treatment aims to ease pain or discomfort and in some cases is used to prevent extension of a blood clot. Treatment will depend on the size of the STP.

Where a small area of the vein is inflamed:

Anti-inflammatory painkillers (NSAIDs) which can be taken orally or topically (applied directly to the skin), if you are unable to take these painkillers others can be given, discuss this with your doctor.

Where a larger area of the vein is inflamed:

A short course of an anticoagulant may be given. If the STP is very close to the deep veins the anticoagulant is given for a longer period to prevent the clots from forming and extending into these veins.

This will be discussed with you and what treatment you will require.

Anticoagulants have side effects, the main ones being bruising /bleeding. This will be discussed with you by your Doctor or Nurse and you will be given time to ask questions.

Frequently asked questions:

When will I see the Doctor / Nurse?

For many cases of STP you will be seen in the acute medical unit and directly referred to your GP.

If you have an Ultrasound scan and it shows that the STP needs anticoagulant treatment then you will be referred to the Anticoagulant (Thrombosis) service, who will discuss your diagnosis and treatment options further with you.

How long will it take before symptoms improve?

STP can take four-six weeks to settle if the STP is small. The vein may be tender, and you may be able to notice some lumps under the skin for longer than this.

If the STP is larger or near the deep veins and you are on anticoagulation, you will be followed up by the thrombosis team who you can discuss your symptoms and treatment with.

Most people with STP will make a full recovery, if you feel that your symptoms are not improving you can discuss this further with either your GP or thrombosis team.

If you keep having episodes of STP you may be referred to the vascular team.

What measures can I take to improve the symptoms of STP?

- In some cases, compression stockings may help with swelling and inflammation, you will be referred to the vascular nurse if you need these.
- A warm moist towel or flannel can be applied to area which may help.
- Keep as mobile as you possibly can.
- Keep well hydrated.
- Keep the affected leg elevated when sitting, this will help improve venous blood flow and help reduce swelling.

When can I fly?

If your STP is close to the junction with the deep veins and you are on full anticoagulation, then your anticoagulant /thrombosis team will discuss this with you.

Less severe STP can travel but frequent breaks are recommended, ensure you stand and mobilise if possible and keep well hydrated.

When can I exercise?

You can walk /drive / light exercise as long as your leg is not too painful. Normal activity should be able to resume when the symptoms have settled.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

Haematology Liverpool Patient Line

Tel: 0151 706 3397

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 3397

External Websites

www.thrombosisuk.org

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