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Risks: Study Ties Dirty Air to Blood Clots in Legs

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Exposure to air pollution increases the risk for deep vein thrombosis, the blood clots that commonly occur in the leg veins. And the worse the air pollution, the higher the risk.

Researchers studied [871 D.V.T.](#) patients in the Lombardy region of Italy, comparing them with 1,210 healthy people.

They tested levels of particulate air pollution — dust, soot and other tiny bits of matter suspended in the air — in areas where the patients lived, using monitors at 53 sites over a one-year period. The [study](#) was published May 12 in The Archives of Internal Medicine.

After adjusting for various health factors, the researchers found that for each increase of 10 micrograms per cubic meter in particulate matter, the risk for D.V.T increased by

70 percent. The effect of air pollution was smaller in women and not apparent at all in those using oral contraceptives or taking hormone therapy. Oral contraceptives themselves increase the risk for blood clots, but air pollution had no added effect.

“It’s a risk to live where pollution is high,” said Dr. Andrea Baccarelli, the lead author and an assistant professor of environmental health at the University of Milan. “But air pollution is not the only risk for D.V.T. Rather, this emphasizes the need for having a healthy lifestyle. That’s important wherever you live, but even more important if you live where pollution is high.”

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