# Can a Car Accident Cause Blood Clots or a Pulmonary Embolism?

## How Crash Injuries Lead to Dangerous Clots, and What That Means for a Georgia Injury Claim

Blood clots and pulmonary embolisms after a Georgia car accident often show up days or weeks after the crash. By then, the injured person may be home from the hospital. They're focused on healing a broken leg or recovering from surgery. A swollen calf or sudden shortness of breath can signal a serious complication.

These complications are often tied directly to the crash injuries and the treatment that followed. When that link is documented, the costs and harm from a clot belong in a Georgia car accident claim. Insurers don't always see it that way, especially when the clot appears weeks later.

Our Georgia car accident attorneys at Gary Martin Hays, LLC connect delayed complications to the crash that set them in motion. We also make sure the full course of treatment is part of the claim. That includes the risk of future clots and the care they may require.

**How We Help**

- **Connect the Clot to the Crash** – We gather medical records and physician opinions that link a clot to the injuries and treatment that followed the accident.
- **Document Every Stage of Treatment** – Hospital stays, blood thinners, imaging, and follow-up care are tracked so no cost is left out.
- **Account for Long-Term Effects** – We work with doctors to identify lasting problems, such as chronic leg swelling or reduced lung function.
- **Answer the Insurer's Alternative Explanations** – We address arguments that a clot came from medication, health history, or something other than the crash.
- **Pursue Wrongful Death Claims When Needed** – If a pulmonary embolism proves fatal, we help families seek compensation for their loss.

### How Car Accidents Lead to Blood Clots

Crash injuries create several conditions that make clots more likely. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) explains the connection. "Blood clots can develop in veins damaged by surgery or trauma," the agency says. A broken leg or crushed pelvis can damage nearby veins. Surgery to repair those injuries adds more risk.

Immobility plays a major role too. Being still "slows blood flow through the veins in your arms and legs," according to the NHLBI. That raises the likelihood of a clot. Patients in casts, traction, or hospital beds after a crash may barely move for days. That's one reason clots often form during recovery rather than at the scene.

### What Is a Pulmonary Embolism?

Most dangerous clots begin as a deep vein thrombosis (DVT), usually in the leg. If part of that clot breaks loose, it can travel to the lungs and block blood flow. That blockage is called a pulmonary embolism (PE). Together, DVT and PE are known as venous thromboembolism (VTE).

A pulmonary embolism is a medical emergency. The NHLBI warns that a large clot or many clots "can cause death." The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) adds a sobering figure. Sudden death is the first symptom in about one quarter of people who have a PE.

## Warning Signs of Blood Clots After a Crash

Clot symptoms can be mistaken for normal soreness after an accident. Anyone recovering from crash injuries should know the warning signs and get medical help right away if they appear. Chest pain and trouble breathing always call for emergency care. That's true even when the injured person assumes the pain comes from bruised ribs.

| Condition | Where It Usually Forms | Common Warning Signs | Why It's Urgent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Deep Vein Thrombosis | Deep veins of the leg or thigh | Swelling, pain, warmth, or redness in one leg | Part of the clot can break off and travel to the lungs |
| Pulmonary Embolism | Arteries in the lungs | Sudden shortness of breath, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, or coughing | It can block blood flow to the lungs and become fatal |
| Post-Thrombotic Syndrome | The leg where a DVT formed | Lasting swelling, pain, skin discoloration, or scaling | It can cause long-term problems after the clot is treated |

Chest symptoms after a crash can come from other injuries too. A pulmonary contusion after a car accident or a collapsed lung can cause similar problems. Only a medical evaluation can tell the difference, and delay can be dangerous. Imaging and blood tests help doctors identify a clot quickly.

## Which Crash Injuries Carry the Highest Risk?

Injuries that damage leg or pelvic veins raise the risk most. So do injuries that keep a person off their feet for long stretches. A broken femur from a car accident often requires surgery and weeks of limited movement. Acetabular fractures of the hip socket can do the same.

Spinal cord injuries are another concern. The NHLBI notes they can damage deep veins and may cause paralysis, which reduces blood flow. The agency also says the chance of a clot is highest in the first three months after surgery. That timeline is why a clot weeks after a crash can still be connected to it.

## Lasting Effects That Belong in the Claim

A clot can change a person's health long after the initial treatment. The CDC reports that one third to one half of people who have a DVT develop long-term complications. That condition is

called post-thrombotic syndrome. The CDC also reports that about a third of people with VTE will have another one within 10 years.

Those risks can mean months of blood thinners, ongoing monitoring, and limits on work and activity. Blood thinners also carry bleeding risks that affect daily life. A doctor's opinion about future care helps put a value on these losses. So does the medical imaging that documented the clot.

## How Insurers Challenge Clot-Related Claims

Adjusters often argue that a clot came from something other than the crash. They may point to birth control, smoking, weight, age, a long car trip, or a family history of clotting. The longer the gap between the accident and the diagnosis, the harder they may push that argument.

Medical records usually answer it. A treating doctor can explain how the fracture, surgery, and immobility created the conditions for the clot. Records showing the injured person's activity level before the crash also help. Going to the hospital after a car accident creates the first link in that chain of evidence.

## When a Pulmonary Embolism Is Fatal

Some families lose a loved one to a pulmonary embolism weeks after a crash that seemed survivable. When the clot traces back to injuries caused by another driver, Georgia law allows a wrongful death claim. Fatal car accident claims can include the full value of the life lost. They can also cover final medical care and funeral costs.

Deadlines still apply. Under O.C.G.A. § 9-3-33, most personal injury and wrongful death lawsuits in Georgia must be filed within two years. A delayed complication doesn't automatically extend that deadline. Waiting to see how recovery goes can be costly, especially when evidence about the crash is still fresh.

## An Example of a Delayed Complication

As an example, a Lilburn delivery driver is T-boned at an intersection on Lawrenceville Highway and breaks his tibia. He has surgery and goes home in a cast. Three weeks later, his calf swells, and he collapses from shortness of breath. Doctors diagnose a DVT and a pulmonary embolism.

The at-fault driver's insurer might argue the clot was unrelated to the crash. His surgeon's records, the timing after surgery, and his limited mobility could show otherwise. His claim could then include the emergency care and months of blood thinners. It could also cover lost income and the risk of future clots.

## Every Complication Belongs in the Claim

A blood clot can turn a recovering injury into a life-threatening emergency. It can also add months of treatment and years of risk. Settling before a complication like this is understood can leave an injured person paying for care. That cost should fall on the at-fault driver.

Developed a blood clot after a Georgia crash? Find out what your claim may include in a free consultation. With our No Fee Guarantee, you won't pay anything unless we win. We can review your medical records and help connect every complication to the accident that caused it.