



What are the symptoms of antiphospholipid syndrome?

Antiphospholipid syndrome (APS) can cause three main types of symptoms:

- Non-specific low-grade symptoms
- Symptoms in pregnancy
- Symptoms due to blood clots

Non-specific low-grade symptoms

The typical low-grade symptoms of APS include:

- Headaches and migraines
- Memory problems
- Cognitive (thought) difficulties
- Dizziness and balance problems
- Joint pain
- Fatigue

It is important to remember that these symptoms often occur in patients without APS. Also, a headache or feelings of tiredness in a person with APS may not be due to the syndrome itself.

Pregnancy in APS

In pregnancy, APS is the most important potentially treatable cause of recurrent miscarriage, and is also associated with other complications such as pre-eclampsia, premature birth and stillbirth.

Symptoms due to blood clots

The most common symptoms due to blood clots are:

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) – a sudden painful swelling of one area of the body, most often a leg or arm.

Pulmonary embolism (blood clot on the lung) – a clot enters the lung causing sudden chest pain and breathlessness.

Heart attack – a clot in the heart causes sudden severe chest pain.

Stroke – a clot enters the brain and cuts off the blood supply to part of it. This could cause loss of the ability to speak and to use one arm and/or leg.

Transient ischaemic attack – symptoms are like those of a stroke but the patient recovers fully, usually within the course of a day.

Some people are affected by symptoms more than others. Some people develop only clots, while others do not have blood clots but do have pregnancy complications. As of yet, we simply don't know the reason why different people have different forms of this syndrome. Remember - it is not necessary to have all the symptoms.