

Diagnosing Antiphospholipid Syndrome (APS): for Patients

Could You Have Antiphospholipid Syndrome (APS)?

APS is a condition where the immune system causes blood clots or pregnancy problems due to specific antibodies in the blood.

What symptoms should make you or your doctor consider APS?

- Blood clots (in legs, lungs, brain, heart, skin or other locations)
 - Repeated unexplained miscarriages
 - Unexplained stillbirth or premature birth
 - Severe pre-eclampsia
 - Unusual fixed skin rash (mottled purple skin – "livedo")
 - Low platelets on blood tests (may cause easy bruising)
 - Migraine with aura or memory problems
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How is APS diagnosed?

You need:

1. Clinical features (such as a blood clot or pregnancy loss)
2. Blood tests showing certain antibodies – at least twice, 12 weeks apart

The currently widely available APS tests include:

- Lupus anticoagulant
- Anticardiolipin antibodies
- Anti-beta-2 glycoprotein I antibodies

A diagnosis cannot be made from a single blood test or without symptoms.

What happens if you're diagnosed?

- You may need blood-thinning medication (e.g. warfarin)
- If pregnant or planning pregnancy, specialist care helps reduce risk
- You should be followed by a rheumatologist or haematologist