

Topic Page: [Embolus](#)

Definition: **Embolus** from *Black's Medical Dictionary, 43rd Edition*

Substances – for example, air, AMNIOTIC FLUID, blood clot, fat or foreign body – that are carried by the blood from a vessel (or vessels) in one part of the body to another part where the matter lodges in a blood vessel causing a blockage (see EMBOLISM).

Summary Article: **embolus**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

(ĕm'bəīθs), foreign matter circulating in and obstructing a blood vessel. It may be a portion of a clot that has separated from the wall of a vessel (see thrombosis), a bubble of gas or air (known as an air embolus), a globule of fat, a clump of bacterial matter, or a clump of tumor cells. It circulates freely through the vessels until it reaches one so small that it cannot go further. An embolus in one of the vessels leading to the lungs, brain, or heart, if large enough, can be fatal; in an arm or leg it may lead to gangrene and, ultimately, the need for amputation. Emergency surgical removal is usually the treatment of choice for a solid embolus. Otherwise, drugs that dilate the vessels and anticoagulants are indicated.

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embolus. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/embolus>



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