

WARFARIN (COUMADIN) Patient Education

What is Warfarin?

- Warfarin is a “blood thinner” used to prevent or treat blood clots.

When should I take this drug?

- Take this drug at the same time every day.
- Your physician may tell you when to take it, otherwise take at a time easiest to remember.
- If you forget to take your warfarin at the usual time, but remember it within six (6) hours, you ~~still~~ still take it.
- If you remember your medicine more than 6 hours after a missed dose, skip it that day and start ~~again~~ the next day on schedule.
- **Never** take a double dose to “catch-up” for a dose you have missed.
- **Get your regular blood test to check your response to COUMADIN.**
Your healthcare provider will decide what laboratory values are best for you.

Can I take other drugs with the “blood thinner”?

- **Always tell your doctor, dentist, and pharmacist that you are taking warfarin,** and check with them before taking any new medication.
- You should never take aspirin or aspirin-containing products **unless prescribed by your doctor.** ~~They~~ include Bayer®, Ascriptin®, Ecotrin®, Extra-Strength Excedrin®, Alka-Seltzer®, Pepto- Bismol®, headache powders (BC®, Goody’s®, etc.), and many others.
- You should also avoid taking ibuprofen (Nuprin®, Advil®, Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®), ketoprofen (Orudis KT®), cimetidine (Tagamet HB®), and certain herbal products (*see next page*).
- Certain prescription medications are best avoided because they may affect your warfarin.
You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) in limited amounts for headaches, fever, etc. If you have questions about other medications, please ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Can I drink alcohol?

- It is best to not drink alcohol while taking warfarin. Alcohol can change the amount of warfarin you need.
- Avoid heavy or binge drinking. If you fall or get hurt while drinking, serious bleeding may occur.

What are the side effects of this drug?

- Bleeding is the most frequent problem.
- You should watch for bleeding from your nose or gums, coughing up blood, bruising easily, and heavier menstrual periods. Also watch for blood in your urine (color can be dark like Coca-Cola) and for blood in your stool (stool may be red or black and sticky). If you notice bleeding, call your doctor.

Is it safe to become pregnant while on this drug?

- No! This drug can cause serious birth defects. If you wish to become pregnant or think you may be pregnant, see your doctor quickly.

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What are some of the specific herbal products that should be avoided?

- Herbal products that may interfere with warfarin include chamomile, cinchona bark, danshen, dong quai, feverfew, garlic, ginger, ginko, ginseng, grape seed, guarana, horse chestnut, papaya, and pau D'arco. Taking these herbs with warfarin may increase your chance of bleeding.
- There may be other herbal products that interfere with your warfarin therapy that have not been reported yet. Always check with your doctor and/or pharmacist before taking any herbal products.

Should I avoid foods with high amounts of Vitamin K?

- Intake of foods with medium to high vitamin K intake should be limited with warfarin therapy. If you do consume these foods, be sure to be consistent with the amount of these foods that you eat.

Does cooking, freezing, or drying foods change how much vitamin K is in them?

- There is little information available, but it appears that the amount does not change.

Why should I stay on the same general diet everyday?

- Large changes in the amount of vitamin K you eat may affect the way your warfarin works. It is important for you to keep your diet **consistent**.
- Contact your healthcare provider before making major changes to your diet, including changes if you are sick.

Avoid drastic changes in dietary habits such as eating large amounts of leafy, green vegetables. Limit to no more than 1 serving per day of foods HIGH in Vitamin K.

<i>Foods LOW in Vitamin K</i>	<i>Foods MEDIUM in Vitamin K</i>	<i>Foods HIGH in Vitamin K</i>
<u>Beverages</u> Coffee, Cola, Fruit Juices, Milk, Tea, Water <u>CONDIMENTS & SWEETENERS</u> Honey, Jell-O Gelatin, Peanut Butter, White granulated Sugar <u>Grain Products</u> Bagel (plain), Bread, Cereal, Flour, Oatmeal, White Rice, Spaghetti <u>Dairy Products</u> Butter, Cheddar Cheese, Sour Cream, Yogurt, Eggs <u>Fats and Dressings</u> Oils (corn, peanut sesame, safflower, sunflower) – 7 Tbsp <u>Fruits</u> Apple, Banana, Blueberries, Cantaloupe, Grapes, Grapefruit, Lemon, Orange, Peach <u>Meat</u> Beef, Chicken, Ham, Mackerel, Pork, Shrimp, Tuna, Turkey <u>Vegetables</u> Green Beans, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery, Corn, Cucumber (peeled), Eggplant, Mushroom, Onion, Raw Green Pepper, Potato, Pumpkin, Tomato	<u>Fats & Dressings</u> Margarine, Olive Oils – 7 Tbsp <u>Vegetables</u> Asparagus Avocado Raw Iceberg Lettuce Green Peas <u>Condiments & Sweeteners</u> Dill Pickle – 1 Medium	<u>FATS & DRESSINGS</u> Mayonnaise, Oils (canola, salad, soybean) – 7 Tbsp <u>VEGETABLES</u> Broccoli Brussels Sprouts Cabbage Collard Greens Kale Mustard Greens Raw Endive lettuce Raw, bib, red leaf lettuce Parsley Raw Watercress Spinach Swiss chard Turnip greens