

*Follow the important diet guidelines in this brochure to keep your blood levels of vitamin K stable.*

## **Warfarin Sodium (Coumadin®)**

Warfarin is a medicine that prevents blood clots from forming in the blood. It is an anticoagulant or often called a “blood thinner.” Warfarin does not actually thin the blood, but it works to prevent new clots from forming or existing clots from getting bigger and causing more serious problems.

Warfarin does not dissolve clots that have already formed. It is used to prevent harmful clotting related to certain blood vessel, heart and lung conditions.

### **Dosage, administration and blood testing**

Your physician or pharmacist selects your correct dose of warfarin by doing blood tests called an international normalized ratio (INR) and a prothrombin time (PT). These tests show how long it takes your blood to clot. If your clotting time is too high or low, your dose of warfarin will be changed. When you first start taking warfarin, your INR or PT will be checked often. This is to determine a safe and effective dose.

Once your dose is set, you may not need your INR checked as often, but it must still be checked on a regular basis. This helps to ensure your dose is working properly. Too high of a dose may cause bleeding. Too low of a dose may not be enough to prevent blood clots from forming.

Take this medicine only as directed by your physician.

- Take warfarin at the same time each day. Evening is usually best, but check with your physician or pharmacist. Warfarin can be taken with or without food.
- Take exactly the amount of warfarin prescribed. Do not take more or less.
- Do not take warfarin more often than your physician prescribed.
- Do not take warfarin for a longer time than your physician prescribed.

It is best to keep a record of each dose as you take it to avoid mistakes. Bring this to each physician or clinic visit.

### **Missed dose**

If you miss a dose of warfarin, take it as soon as you remember unless it is close to your next dose. If it is close to your next dose, skip the missed dose and then resume your regular schedule. This way, you do not take a double or extra dose.

Always tell your physician or pharmacist about each missed dose.

## Diet guidelines and vitamin K interactions

Foods that contain vitamin K can affect the way warfarin works. It is important to maintain a healthy, consistent and balanced diet. Abrupt changes in your diet, especially crash diets, fad diets and taking diet supplements, may change the amount of vitamin K in your body. This may affect the way your body bleeds or clots.

Plan to eat the same types and amounts of foods that contain vitamin K on a regular basis. For example, if you usually eat 3 salads each week, then it is best to continue eating 3 salads each week. **A consistent diet is best.**

Try to avoid eating large amounts of foods that are high in vitamin K (see the list below). However, you do not need to remove all of these foods from your diet. Remember, consistency is the key.

The table below lists some common food sources of vitamin K. If you eat a food from this list, try to eat the same amount of it each time. Substitute foods from this list with other foods containing a similar amount of vitamin K when you plan your meals. If you have any questions or change how often you eat these foods, contact your physician, nurse or pharmacist.

### ***Food sources of vitamin K***

<b>Food</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Micrograms (mcg) of vitamin K*</b>	<b>Level of vitamin K</b>
Kale, cooked	1/2 cup	530	High
Spinach, cooked	1/2 cup	444	High
Spinach, raw	1/2 cup	94	High
Collard greens, cooked	1/2 cup	365	High
Mustard greens, cooked	1/2 cup	415	High
Turnip greens, cooked	1/2 cup	265	High
Parsley, raw	1/2 cup	492	High
Brussel sprouts, cooked	1/2 cup	150	High
Broccoli, cooked	1/2 cup	110	Medium
Broccoli, raw	1/2 cup	45	Medium
Lettuce, romaine, iceberg, raw	1 cup	48	Medium
Cabbage, cooked	1/2 cup	80	Medium
Pickles or cucumber	1 cup	75	Medium
Asparagus, cooked	1/2 cup	45	Medium
Kiwifruit	1/2 cup	36	Medium
Blackberries or blueberries, raw	1 cup	28	Medium
Grapes, red or green	1 cup	22	Medium
Peas, cooked	1/2 cup	20	Medium

\*Values listed are for fresh produce; frozen or canned produce may slightly differ.

## Beverages

Drinking too much alcohol may change the way warfarin works in your body. It is best to avoid alcohol. Please talk with your physician if you have questions about alcohol intake.

It is best to avoid drinking green tea, grapefruit juice and cranberry juice, as well. These beverages can also work against warfarin.

## Medication and herbal product interactions

Some antibiotics can increase or decrease the effect of warfarin. **Before taking any new antibiotics, please check with your physician or pharmacist about interactions with warfarin.**

Warfarin should not be taken with any other oral anticoagulants, such as apixaban (Eliquis<sup>®</sup>), rivaroxaban (Xarelto<sup>®</sup>), dabigatran etexilate (Pradaxa<sup>®</sup>) or edoxaban (Savaysa<sup>®</sup>). It can be taken with the injected blood thinner medicine enoxaparin (Lovenox<sup>®</sup>) for short periods of time, as directed by your physician.

Some over-the-counter (OTC) medicines can also increase or decrease the effect of warfarin. OTC medicine is medicine bought without a prescription. It is important to **talk to your physician or pharmacist before you use:**

- Any OTC medicines.
- Herbal medicines or supplements.
- Vitamins (many contain vitamin K). If you need to take vitamins, be sure to take them at the same time each day.
- Products containing vitamin A and vitamin E. Large amounts of these vitamins may affect warfarin.
- Ginkgo, ginseng, garlic tablets, St. John's wort, coenzyme Q10, fish oil, dong quai, feverfew, ginger, licorice, willow bark, wheatgrass and flaxseed oil.
- Aspirin or other pain medicines known as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). When buying a pain reliever, always read the label ingredients and ask your physician, nurse or pharmacist for advice if you are unsure what it contains. A few common OTC medicines to avoid are:

Aspirin-containing medications	NSAIDs
Excedrin <sup>®</sup>	Ibuprofen (Advil <sup>®</sup> , Motrin <sup>®</sup> )
Anacin <sup>®</sup>	Naproxen sodium (Aleve <sup>®</sup> )
Bufferin <sup>®</sup>	

- Cold or sinus medicine, laxatives, or antacids. Aspirin or NSAIDs may be a hidden ingredient in these products.

However, there are some conditions that are best treated with both warfarin and aspirin. **Do not take both aspirin and warfarin unless your physician has advised you to do so.**

## Special instructions

- Do not take this medicine if you are allergic to warfarin or any ingredients in warfarin (such as lactose, starch, magnesium stearate and certain food dyes).
- Do not begin taking this medicine during pregnancy, and do not become pregnant while taking it. This medicine can cause birth defects. Consult your physician if you plan to become pregnant.
- Do not change your weight by dieting without talking with your physician.
- If you will be traveling for any length of time, inform your physician.
- Tell all of your physicians, your dentist and your pharmacy that you are taking warfarin.

## For your safety

Warfarin can increase your risk of bleeding. Be careful when doing activities that could cause injury.

- Tell your physician about any falls, blows to your body or head, or other injuries.
- Place a non-slip bath mat in the tub to prevent accidents.
- Be careful to avoid cutting yourself. Use an electric shaver rather than a razor blade.
- Take special care in brushing your teeth. Use a soft toothbrush. Floss gently.
- If you cut yourself, apply pressure to the area for 5 minutes to make sure the bleeding has stopped.
- It is important that you carry identification, such as a MedicAlert® bracelet, stating that you are taking this medicine. This will help to ensure you will get proper treatment in case of an emergency.

## When to call your physician

Notify your physician right away if any of the following side effects occur:

### ***Signs of bleeding:***

- Prolonged bleeding from cuts or wounds
- Nosebleed
- Coughing up blood
- Blood in your urine or stool
- Black stool (if you are not taking iron supplements)
- Bleeding gums
- Unusual bruising or change in skin color
- Dizziness or faintness
- Stomach or intestinal upset
- Continuing headaches
- Unusually heavy menstrual bleeding

### ***Signs of clotting:***

- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Swelling, pain, warmth and/or redness in the legs or arms
- Pain in your leg(s) when walking
- Signs or symptoms of stroke:
  - Numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
  - Facial drooping
  - Sudden confusion
  - Trouble speaking or understanding speech
  - Difficulty seeing

Less common side effects include fever, nausea and swelling in other parts of your body.

Please ask questions to make certain you understand how much medicine to take and when to take it. Call your physician if you have any questions.

### **Storage and disposal**

Keep this medicine:

- In its original container and tightly closed.
- Out of reach of children.
- At room temperature.
- Away from heat and direct light.
- Away from damp places, including the bathroom.

Dispose of leftover medicine properly. This medicine could be harmful to children, pets or others if taken by accident. To ensure safe and secure disposal of leftover medicine, return unused or unwanted medication to a collection site.

- Ask your local pharmacy if they take back this medicine for disposal.
- Participate in take-back events. Call your city or county government's household trash and recycling service, and ask if a medicine take-back program is available in your community.
- Look up local collection sites through the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) website: **[apps2.deadiversions.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main](https://apps2.deadiversions.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main)**.
- Call the DEA at 800.882.9539 to locate a disposal site in your area.

If you are unable to locate an authorized collector, dispose of the medicine as follows:

1. Take the medicine out of the original container.
2. Mix it with kitty litter, dirt or coffee grounds.
3. Place the mix in a sealable bag or container.
4. Throw it away in your household trash. Make sure to remove all personal information from the original container.