

Your Guide To: **WARFARIN (COUMADIN, JANTOVEN)**

WHAT IS WARFARIN?

Warfarin is a type of medication that prevents clots from forming in your blood. Blood clots can stick to vessel walls or move around the body and cause serious problems. It is important that your health care provider has your detailed medical history in order to determine if you are a candidate for this medication. Warfarin, Coumadin and Jantoven are all blood thinners. These are just different names for the same type of medication.

My goal
INR is:

WHY DO I NEED WARFARIN?

There are many reasons why you may need warfarin. Severe blockages, lack of movement, heart arrhythmias and mechanical devices in the body are some of the things that could cause blood clots. If you have any of these risk factors, or if you already have a blood clot, your doctor will determine if you could benefit from Warfarin.

WHY DOES MY BLOOD LEVEL HAVE TO BE MONITORED SO CLOSELY?

While warfarin is a commonly used medication, too much can be harmful and too little can be ineffective. In order to monitor the levels of warfarin in your body, a blood test must be taken monthly (perhaps more often if deemed necessary by your health care professional). Diet and other medications can also affect these levels, so they must also be closely monitored. It is recommended that you take warfarin at 4 p.m. every day to keep the level consistent.

WHAT TYPE OF BLOOD TEST WILL I NEED TO TAKE?

The test is usually a finger prick and the results are known immediately. The test measures two levels. The first level is the blood clotting time or the prothrombin time (PT). Another number recorded is the International Normalized Ratio (INR) which is a consistent method that is used all over the world for recording levels. Together these numbers are called your PT/INR. It is important to become familiar with your specific goal INR. Together, we should try to keep this number within a certain range.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MY DIET AND OTHER MEDICATIONS?

Vitamin K was provided by nature to help clot the blood and stop excessive bleeding. When doctors wish to prevent blood clots, it is necessary to partially reverse this natural defense mechanism. Therefore, in order for your warfarin to work properly, you must keep your intake of vitamin K consistent. Each time you visit CIS to have your blood checked, it's important to let us know if you have eaten more foods containing vitamin K than normal. Antibiotics, aspirin and aspirin products have the opposite effect. They can increase the effect of the warfarin, which could cause bleeding.

Be particularly cautious with alcohol consumption. Since its effects on your INR level can be highly unpredictable, it should be consumed sparingly. You will be given a list of items that you must monitor use and consumption of while on Warfarin.

Different medications can have similar effects to those described above. Some can thin your blood and some can thicken it. For this reason, it is important that all of your physicians and family members know that you are on warfarin. Always notify us of any medications that other doctors prescribe or discontinue so we can regulate your PT level accordingly. Examples would be antibiotics, non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, herbs (including garlic) and over-the-counter medications, including topical analgesics.

WHAT SIDE EFFECTS SHOULD I REPORT TO MY DOCTOR?

You should report nosebleeds, blood in urine or stool, blood with coughing or vomiting, bruises that become larger, heavier than normal periods, any abnormal bleeding, and bleeding that doesn't stop within 10 minutes.

You should also report if you have a hard fall, hit your head, have chest pain, head pain or pressure, shortness of breath, dizziness, weakness or any feeling that is unusual. You should also tell your physician if you have diarrhea, infection or fever. Remember, it is always better to be safe than sorry. Depending upon the circumstances, we may have you come to the office to have your PT checked.

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DO I NEED TO TAKE ANY SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS?

Absolutely. Don't use a regular razor blade to shave anymore. Switch to an electric razor if possible. Use a soft toothbrush that isn't as likely to damage your gums. Always wear shoes to prevent cuts on your feet, and have someone else carefully trim your nails. Don't trim corns and calluses on your own. Protect yourself against falls.

You may wish to purchase a medical alert bracelet to let others know that you are on warfarin in case of emergency. Always check your prescription when having it filled. Be sure that the pharmacist gives you Warfarin each time, unless your doctor specifies a different one. If you forget a dose of warfarin, wait until the next scheduled dose to get back on schedule. Don't double your medication. Notify your dentist and other physicians that you are on warfarin before scheduling any procedure— even before having a routine dental cleaning.

ITEMS TO MONITOR FOR PATIENTS TAKING WARFARIN

If your diet includes any of the following items, it is important to try to consume them in consistent amounts. If you should happen to eat more than your normal amount of any of these items, tell your anti-coagulant nurse at your next monthly visit.

Agrimony	Cabbage	Feverfew	Liver	Soybeans
Alfalfa	<i>(green and red)</i>	Garbanzo Beans	Mayonnaise	Spinach
Aniseed		Garlic	Meadowsweet	Sweet Clover
Arnica	Canola Oil	German Sarsaparilla	Mustard Greens	Sweet Woodruff
Asa Foetida	Capsicum	Ginger	Nettle	Swiss Chard
Asparagus	Cassia	Ginko Biloba	Olive Oil	Tamarind
Aspen	Cauliflower	Ginseng (Panax)	Parsley	Tonka Beans
Avocado	Celery	Green Beans	Passion Flower	Turnip Greens
Beer	Chamomile	Green Peas	Policosanol	Watercress
Black Cohosh	<i>(German & Roman)</i>	Green Tea	Poplar	Wild Carrot
Black Haw	Clove	Horse Chestnut	Prickly Ash	Wild Lettuce
Bladder Wrack	Colesaw	Horseradish	<i>(Northern)</i>	Willow
Bogbean	Collard Greens	Kale	Quassia	Wine
Boldo	Cucumber Peel	Lentils	Red Clover	Wintergreen
Broccoli	Dandelion	Lettuce	Sauerkraut	
Brussels Sprouts	Endive	Licorice	Senega	
Buchu	Fenugreek	Liquor	Soybean Oil	

ALSO NOTE:

- Aloe gel can be absorbed through the skin. Let the anti-coagulant nurse know at your monthly visit if you use this gel.
- Alcohol intake should not be more than 1-2 drinks per day
- Report dietary changes or changes in medicines to the anti-coagulant nurse at your monthly visit.