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## **WARFARIN INFORMATION LEAFLET**

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## **About Warfarin**

Warfarin increases the time that it takes for your blood to clot. This means that it can be used to prevent and treat blood clots from forming in veins and arteries, e.g. clots in your legs, lungs, brain or heart.

## **How to take Warfarin**

- Before beginning treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet.
- Take Warfarin exactly as you have been advised by your Doctor or Warfarin Clinic.
- Try to take your Warfarin at the same time each day to avoid missing any doses. It is usually recommended to take Warfarin at 6 p.m. in the evening.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If you do not remember until the following day, skip the missed dose, and take your next dose when it is due. Do not take two doses together to make up for a forgotten dose.

## **Getting the Most from Your Treatment**

- You will be given an anticoagulant record book. Read this carefully and carry it with you at all times.
- You will have regular blood tests to check how the Warfarin in your blood is working – these blood tests are very important. The extent to which Warfarin is working is measured by the INR (International Normalised Ratio), a measure of the ability of your blood to prevent clotting.
- Changing your diet suddenly can affect your Warfarin levels, especially if you begin to eat more vegetables and salad or if you change the amount of fatty foods you have been eating. You should not begin a weight reducing diet without discussing it with your Doctor first.
- Avoid drinking cranberry juice while you are taking this medicine as it may affect the levels of Warfarin in your body.
- Only drink alcohol in moderation as this can also affect the levels of Warfarin in your body.

- If you buy any medicines check with a pharmacist that they are safe to take with Warfarin, e.g., some painkillers and vitamins should not be taken alongside Warfarin.

### **Can Warfarin Cause Problems?**

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects, although not everyone experiences them. These usually improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine, but speak with your Doctor or pharmacist if any of the following side-effects continue or become troublesome.

#### ***Possible Side-Effects***

#### ***What Can I do if I Experience This***

Unusual bruising, bleeding, blood in the urine, blackened stools	See your Doctor – your dose of Warfarin will probably need to be reduced
Diarrhoea	Drink plenty of water to replace lost fluids
Rash	See your Doctor if this persists
Hair loss	See your Doctor if this persists
Feeling or being sick	Eat little and often. Stick to simple or bland foods. If you are sick drink plenty of liquid

**Important:** If you notice any yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes (jaundice) contact your doctor or Warfarin Clinic immediately.

### **Prescribed Antibiotics**

If the Doctor prescribes you oral antibiotics for an infection it can affect your Warfarin level and may require more frequent monitoring.

### **How to Store Warfarin**

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

## **Potential Interactions with Food**

Some foods (particularly green, leafy vegetables) can affect an individual's response to Warfarin. Patients should be advised not to make significant changes in the consumption of these foods, since stopping, starting or changing can affect INR levels.

### ***Reduce Effect of Warfarin:***

- High Vitamin K content foods such as green vegetables, e.g:
  - Broccoli
  - Brussel sprouts
  - Spinach
  - Kale
  - Cabbage
  - Lettuce (dark green or red)
  - Watercress
- Avocado
- Beetroot
- Soya bean products/soya milk
- Sushi containing seaweed
- Ice cream in large quantities (>1 litre)
- Alcohol – variable effect – starting, stopping or changing alcohol intake will effect INR – moderate intake (2 units daily) not thought to be problematic
- Tonic water

### ***Enhance Effect of Warfarin:***

- Cranberry juice\*
- Grapefruit juice
- Mango

\* Current advice is that patients should avoid taking cranberry juice, or other cranberry products, unless the health benefits are considered to outweigh any risks.

**Please note these are not exhaustive but contain the most common, documented Warfarin-food interactions.**

## **Potential Interactions with Supplements**

Some dietary supplements and herbal preparations can also affect INR. Although there is less documented evidence of the extent and importance of these interactions, it would be sensible to avoid these preparations.

### ***Reduce Effect of Warfarin:***

- Multi-vitamin preparations containing Vitamin K
- St. John's Wort
- Herbal preparations: Agrimony, Golden Seal, Mistletoe, Yarrow

### ***Enhance Effect of Warfarin***

- Garlic
- Fish oil
- Vitamin E
- Herbal Preparations: Alfalfa, Angelica, Aniseed, Arnica, Asafoetida, Bilberry, Boldo, Capsicum, Cat's Claw, Celery, Chamomile, Clove, Dandelion, Dong Quai, Fenugreek, Feverfew, Fucus, Ginger, Ginkgo, Ginseng, Horse chestnut, Horseradish, Licorice, Meadowsweet, Nettle, Passionflower, Poplar, Prickly Ash, Quassia, Red Clover, Willow

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