
Warfarin

(Coumadin[®], Jantoven[®])

*Taking your
medication
safely*

Welcome

This booklet is designed to provide you with important information about warfarin to help you take this medication safely and effectively. You may also know warfarin by the brand names Jantoven® or Coumadin®. When taking warfarin it is important to get regular blood tests (usually every month) so that your doctor can make sure you are on the right dose.

Look in the back of this booklet for a medication calendar to help you track your monthly blood tests and any dose changes.

What is warfarin?

Warfarin (brand name Coumadin® or Jantoven®) is a medication that is used to prevent blood clots from forming. Blood clots can block normal blood flow and can cause pain, or worse, break off into pieces and go to the heart, or brain, causing a heart attack or stroke, or the lung, causing a pulmonary embolism. Warfarin does not dissolve clots that already have formed, but it is used to prevent new clots from forming or existing clots from becoming larger. It works by increasing the amount of time it takes for blood to clot.

How should I take

- Take your warfarin dose at the same time every day.
- If you forget to take a dose, tell your doctor.

Doctors often prescribe warfarin for atrial fibrillation, heart valve replacement, recent orthopedic surgery such as knee or hip replacement, deep vein thrombosis (DVT), pulmonary embolism or stroke.

How much warfarin you need may be influenced by illness, other medications, alcohol, tobacco or even dietary changes. Too much warfarin may cause you to bleed. Too little may let a harmful clot form. **To make sure your dose is in the safe range, it is important to get regular blood tests.**

warfarin?

- Never take a double dose of warfarin, unless instructed by your doctor.
- Warfarin can be taken with or without food.

Why are the blood tests so important?

To be sure you are on the right dose of warfarin, your doctor will order a blood test called a prothrombin time (protime or PT, for short). The **PT** numbers are then reported as an **INR** (International Normalized Ratio). PT/INR numbers tell your doctor exactly how fast your blood is clotting. This information is necessary to decide whether your dosage of warfarin needs to change.

When you start taking warfarin, you may need frequent PT/INR tests until the correct dose is determined. Thereafter, PT/INR tests will be needed regularly (usually at least once a month) while you are taking the medication to keep your PT/INR in the best range for your medical condition. Based upon your

medical condition and response to warfarin therapy, your doctor will determine your warfarin dose. Discuss with your doctor the PT/INR range that is right for you. It is very important that you **always go for the blood tests scheduled by your doctor.**



What should I know about taking other medications?

Warfarin interacts with many other drugs, including prescription and non-prescription (over-the-counter) drugs, vitamins and nutrition/herbal supplements. Other medications can change the way warfarin affects your body. In some cases your doctor may need to change the other medications, or your warfarin dose may need to be changed.

Tell your doctor about all prescription and non-prescription medications you are taking.



Some of the drugs that may interact with warfarin include:

- certain prescription medications
- non-prescription medications, such as:
 - * ibuprofen (Motrin[®], Advil[®])
 - * aspirin
 - * aspirin-containing ointments and skin creams (Aspercreme[®])
 - * naproxen (Aleve[®])
 - * ulcer and stomach medications, such as cimetidine (Tagamet[®]), omeprazole (Prilosec[™]), Pepto-Bismol[®]
- vitamin supplements containing vitamin K, vitamin E or fish oil
- some herbal medicines, such as St. John's wort, ginkgo, or garlic supplements, and
- tobacco

Taking more than 2000mg of acetaminophen (such as Tylenol[®]) per day for longer than a week may require more frequent monitoring of INR as it may increase the risk of bleeding.

When should I call my doctor?

The most serious side effect from warfarin is bleeding. Watch for these warning signs and call your doctor immediately if you experience:

- cuts that don't stop **bleeding**,
- increased menstrual flow or vaginal bleeding,
- nosebleeds,
- bleeding gums,
- coughing blood, or throwing up blood (may look like coffee grinds),
- unusual **bruising** for unknown reasons, or
- red or dark brown urine or red or black stools.

If your warfarin dose is not high enough, you may develop a blood clot, deep vein thrombosis or DVT (clot in your vein) or pulmonary embolism (clot in your lungs). The first symptoms associated with blood clots are most commonly felt in the legs.

Call your doctor if you experience:

- swelling
- warmth, tenderness, pain or redness

If a blood clot is small, it may not cause symptoms. In some cases, a pulmonary embolism (which causes difficulty in breathing) is the first sign that you have a clot.

What should I know about my diet while I'm taking warfarin?

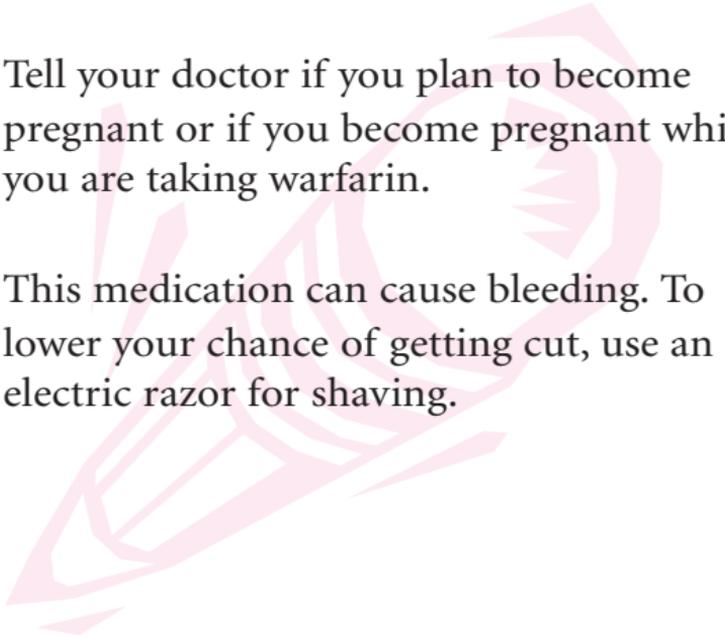
- Eat a sensible, balanced diet.
- Avoid changes in your diet.
- Keep the amount of vitamin K in your diet consistent. Nutritious foods like broccoli, Brussels sprouts, collard greens and spinach are part of a healthy diet. But green, leafy vegetables such as these, and certain vegetable oils (such as canola or soybean oil) contain large amounts of vitamin K. Some legumes such as lentils and chickpeas contain high amounts of vitamin K. Because vitamin K helps the blood to clot, it has a direct impact on the effect of warfarin. **Don't avoid these foods**, just try to keep the amount of vitamin K in your diet consistent.
- It is best to avoid alcohol use when taking warfarin. Speak to your doctor about the risks of moderate alcohol use associated with taking warfarin.

- Avoid cranberry juice or cranberry products because they may increase the risk of bleeding.
- A diet high in protein may reduce the effects of warfarin. If the amount of protein in your diet changes, talk to your doctor. You may require more frequent testing of INR.



Remember...

-  It is important to always go for your PT/INR blood tests to keep your INR in the range that your doctor recommends.
-  Do not start, stop or change any medication except on the advice of your doctor. Tell your doctor about all prescription and non-prescription (over-the-counter) medications that you are taking.
-  Significant changes in your diet may require changes in your dosage of warfarin. Before changing your diet, check with your doctor to see if you will need more frequent blood tests.
-  Ask your doctor what to do if you accidentally miss a dose. Never take a double dose of warfarin.
-  Call your doctor if you have any unusual bleeding or bruising.

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- 📌 Tell anyone giving you medical or dental care that you are taking warfarin. Carry an identification card (you can use the attached card at the back of this booklet) or wear a bracelet indicating that you take warfarin.
 - 📌 Talk to your doctor before beginning a new exercise program.
 - 📌 Tell your doctor if you plan to become pregnant or if you become pregnant while you are taking warfarin.
 - 📌 This medication can cause bleeding. To lower your chance of getting cut, use an electric razor for shaving.

Use this medication calendar to keep track of your dose of warfarin and PT/INR results. Check with your doctor before starting or stopping any medications. Be sure to get regular testing of your INR, usually every month.

Date of Test	PT/ INR Result	Warfarin Dose	Instructions

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I am using warfarin (Coumadin®, Jantoven®) for

This medication is used to prevent harmful blood clots from forming. Please tell this immediately to anyone providing medical or dental care to me.

Name _____ D.O.B. _____

Other Medical Conditions: _____

Other Medications: _____

Medication Allergies: _____

