

# TAKING WARFARIN

(Also known as Coumadin®)



Your doctor prescribed warfarin to keep blood clots from forming



Warfarin along with other medicines will help prevent stroke



Warfarin is an anticoagulant and often called a “blood thinner”



Warfarin should be taken **once per day** with or without food



When you first start warfarin, a blood test called the INR is done a few times a week so that your doctor can determine the right dose for you



After that, blood testing will be needed once a week to once a month depending on the INR result



**NEVER** go longer than once a month to get your blood test

**BECAUSE WARFARIN PREVENTS BLOOD CLOTS, YOU CAN HAVE A HIGHER RISK OF BLEEDING OR BRUISING:**

**TELL YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE:**



Bleeding gums



Bruising too much



Nose bleeds

**CALL YOUR DOCTOR OR GO TO AN EMERGENCY ROOM IF YOU DEVELOP:**



Severe headache with nausea



Becoming pale, very tired and weak, trouble breathing or chest pain



Black or bloody stools



Coughing or vomiting blood



Any serious fall or you hit your head



Bleeding that won't stop

## WHAT YOU CAN DO:



Take your warfarin at the same time every day

- Do not stop taking warfarin without talking to your doctor



**If you miss a dose:**

- Take the missed dose as soon as you remember if it is on the same day
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time
- Never take an extra dose to catch up
- Tell your doctor if you miss more than 2 doses



Make an appointment with your doctor before your prescription runs out



Tell your pharmacist or doctor about all the medicines that you are taking or planning to take, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, herbal products or recreational drugs as many of these products can react with warfarin



Report any side effects to your doctor or pharmacist so that they can give you tips on how to minimize them



**TALK TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER** IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT OR ARE HAVING TROUBLE TAKING YOUR MEDICATIONS

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## TIPS TO KEEP TRACK OF YOUR INR LEVELS AND WARFARIN DOSE



**Know your target INR range**

My INR level should be between:

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_



**Keep a record in your calendar of your INR result and any changes to your warfarin dose**

**Bring this record to your healthcare appointments**



**Get your blood work done each month or more often as requested by your doctor**

**Write down the date of your next INR blood test on your calendar to keep track**

## LIFESTYLE TIPS WHILE TAKING WARFARIN

**There are many things that can affect how warfarin works in your body:** For example, the food you eat, how active you are, or if you get sick. Because of this, your doctor may change your warfarin dose and how often you need INR tests to keep your medicine working at the right level.



**Tell your doctor when you get sick with a cold or flu or if you have nausea, vomiting or diarrhea for more than a day as this could affect your INR**



**Ask your healthcare provider about foods you need to keep track of that contain Vitamin K and could affect your INR levels (such as leafy green vegetables)**

- Don't stop eating these foods
- Eat about the same amount of these foods each day



**Tell your doctor if you make big changes to how active you are**



**Speak with your healthcare provider about the amount of alcohol that is safest**

- Limiting alcohol is best and in some cases, none
- Do not binge drink



**Wear a medical alert bracelet or necklace that identifies that you are on warfarin**

- In case of an emergency, it will be important for your health care team to know



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