Health Facts for You

Warfarin (Coumadin®, Jantoven®)

UWHealth

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Patient Dosing Sheet for Warfarin

You are taking warfarin for _____
INR target range: _____
Start date: _____ Stop date: _____ Tablet strength: _____ mg
Warfarin manager name and location: _____
Phone number: _____

Fill in INR from each lab draw date. Add dose in mg for each day of the week. Make any changes to sheet as needed. Example provided.								
Lab Draw	INR	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1/1	2.0	5 mg	3 mg	5 mg	3 mg	5 mg	3 mg	5 mg

Warfarin sodium (Coumadin®, Jantoven®) is a medicine that helps to stop blood clots from forming. It can also stop an active blood clot from getting bigger.

My Warfarin Plan

Why do I need warfarin?
You may need warfarin:

- If you had a stroke.
- If you have atrial fibrillation.
- If you have heart failure.
- If you had heart valve replacement.
- To treat or prevent deep vein thrombosis (DVT).
- To treat or prevent a pulmonary embolism (PE).

Warfarin Tips

- Take your warfarin exactly as prescribed.
- Never double up on a dose if missed.
- Tell everyone on your health care team that you take warfarin.
- Know the signs and symptoms of bleeding and report them right away.
- Know the signs and symptoms of a blood clot and stroke so you can seek medical help right away if you have them.
- Keep all scheduled INR checks or call to reschedule.

Warfarin Manager
Your warfarin manager is the person who figures out your warfarin dose. To find the dose that is right for you, they ask you about your other medicines and lifestyle choices that can impact your INR. Based on your answers and your INR level, they tell you what warfarin dose to take and when to have your INR checked again.

Tell your warfarin manager if you have:

- Changes in your diet.
- Changes in medicines.
- Missed or extra doses.
- Unusual bruising or bleeding.
- Upcoming procedures or trips.

Dosing

What dose should I take?
There is no standard dose. The amount needed varies for each person. The dose is changed based on a blood test called the INR. It is a test that measures how much time it takes for your blood to clot. The dose on your prescription bottle may not be correct if the dose has changed. Call your clinic if you do not know your proper dose.

How can I tell what dose I am taking?
Both generic (warfarin) and brand (Coumadin®, Jantoven®) use the same color theme, but tablets may be different shapes and sizes.

Dose	Color
1 mg	Pink
2 mg	Purple
2.5 mg	Light green
3 mg	Brown
4 mg	Blue
5 mg	Peach
6 mg	Dark green
7.5 mg	Yellow
10 mg	White

When to Take Warfarin
Take warfarin once a day. Take your dose exactly as prescribed and at the same time each day. Most people are told to take their dose in the evening.

Missing a Dose
If you miss a dose and remember within 12 hours, you may take your dose. If it has been more than 12 hours **do not** take your missed dose. Take your scheduled dose for the current day and call your clinic. Report the missed dose to your warfarin manager. Never double your dose to make up for a missed dose. Never change your dose unless your warfarin manager has told you to do so.

INR

Target INR Range
Your target INR range depends on why you need to take warfarin. Most people on have a target INR range of 2-3 or 2.5-3.5. Your doctor will tell you your INR range.

Checking Your INR
You need to be tested 2-3 times per week when you first start. Once your INR and dose are more constant, you may be able to test less often (about once per month). Your warfarin manager tells you how often to have your blood tested.

Side Effects
Bleeding is the most common side effect. Minor bleeding can occur even if your INR is within your target range.

Minor Bleeding
Talk to your warfarin manager if you have concerns about bleeding. Common signs of minor bleeding include:

- Gums that bleed while you brush your teeth.
- Bruising more than usual.
- Broken blood vessel in your eye that does not cause pain or vision changes.
- Occasional nose bleeds.
- Prolonged menstrual bleeding (heavier than normal).
- Prolonged bleeding after minor cuts.

Major Bleeding
Signs of major bleeding include:

- Any bleeding that lasts more than 10 minutes, that you cannot get to stop.
- Coughing up blood.
- Vomiting blood (this may look like coffee grounds).
- Frequent nose bleeds, gums that bleed, or unusual bleeding.
- Unexplained bruising.
- Red or dark brown urine.
- Red, black, or tarry stool.
- Severe headache.
- Severe stomachache.

Medicines

Interactions
Medicines, herbal products and supplements can affect how your warfarin works. You **must** tell your warfarin manager any time you start or stop a new medicine, herb, or vitamin. We have listed some products that may cause problems when taken with warfarin. These lists are **not** complete.

Products That Increase INR

- Amiodarone (Pacerone®)
- Alcohol (acute ingestion)
- **Ciprofloxacin (Cipro®)**
- **Fluconazole (Diflucan®)**
- Feverfew
- Fenugreek
- Ginkgo
- **Metronidazole (Flagyl®)**
- Moxifloxacin (Avelox®)
- **TMP/Sulfa (Bactrim®)**
- Voriconazole (Vfend®)

Products That Decrease INR

- Carbamazepine (Tegretol®)
- Cholestyramine (Questran®)
- Co-Enzyme Q10
- Dicloxacillin (Dynapen®)
- Ginseng

- Green tea
- Multivitamin
- Nafcillin (Nafcil®)
- Some nutritional drinks
- Phenytoin (Dilantin®)
- Rifampin (Rifadin®)
- St. John's Wort
- Tube feeds

Products That Increase Risk of Bleeding

- Aspirin
- Celcoxib (Celebrex®)
- Clopidogrel (Plavix®)
- Echinacea
- Fish oil (omega-3 fatty acid)
- Ibuprofen (Motrin®)
- Indomethacin (Indocin®)
- Naproxen (Aleve®)
- Prasugrel (Effient®)
- Prednisone (Deltasone®)
- Ticagrelor (Brillinta®)
- Vitamin E

Preventing Interactions

To help prevent interactions, tell your doctors and pharmacists that you take warfarin. Also, try to fill all your medicines at the same pharmacy. Your pharmacist will help screen for interactions.

Lifestyle

Exercise/Sports

A change in activity level can affect your INR. Tell your warfarin manager if you increase or decrease your activity level. Avoid activities that may place you at risk for injury, such as contact sports. Do not play contact sports without talking to your doctor first. You may engage in low-risk physical activities, such as walking, jogging, or swimming.

Travel

If you plan to travel, tell your warfarin manager before your trip. You may need to make plans for INR checks. Carry your medicines with you at all times. Luggage may get lost, and medicines left in cars may get damaged in extreme heat or cold.

Illness

Illness can change your response to warfarin. Tell your doctor or clinic if you have started taking an antibiotic or if you have any of the symptoms listed below:

- Nausea or vomiting for 2 days in a row or more.
- Diarrhea for 2 days in a row or more.
- Severe flu-like symptoms.
- If you have stopped eating or if your food intake has changed due to illness.

Alcohol

Do not have more than 1 alcoholic drink per day, or more than 1 to 2 drinks on special occasions. Drinking more can greatly increase your bleeding risk. Talk to your warfarin manager about your alcohol use.

Surgical, Dental, or Other Procedures

You may need to stop taking warfarin before certain procedures. Have your provider call the clinic that manages your warfarin if they want you to stop taking warfarin for a procedure. Tell your warfarin manager if you were told to stop or hold your warfarin. They may have you use a different type of medicine around the time of your procedure.

Some procedures have a low bleeding risk which may allow you to keep taking your warfarin. These may include:

- Cataract surgeries
- Simple dental procedures
- Minor skin surgeries

Before your provider decides that you should stop or hold warfarin, they will need to consider:

- Why you take warfarin.
- Your risk for a clot or stroke.
- The clotting and bleeding risk of the procedure.
- How long you need to be off the warfarin.

If you have started an injectable medicine to help prevent blood clots, often called "bridging," keep taking this until your warfarin manager tells you to stop. You may need to take both the injection and warfarin until your INR returns to goal range.

Pregnancy
If you think you are or may become pregnant, tell your doctor right away. **Warfarin may harm your unborn baby**. You should use a form of birth control. If you become pregnant, your doctor will talk with you about other treatment options.

Medical Alert Information
In case of an emergency or accident you will want to wear a medical-alert bracelet or necklace or carry an identification card. This alerts the health care team that you take warfarin. Ask your local pharmacy or doctor about how to get these.

Diet

Some foods and other factors can change the way your warfarin works. These include:

- Foods with vitamin K.
- Some nutritional drinks, tube feeds, or breast milk (for infants only).
- Changes in how much food you eat.

Vitamin K
Vitamin K is common in many foods, like green leafy vegetables. Large amounts of vitamin K foods can lessen the effects of warfarin. You **can** keep eating the same amounts of vitamin K foods if they are a regular part of your diet. Be aware of how many servings and how often you eat foods high in vitamin K.

Foods High in Vitamin K
Serving size is ½ cup cooked or 1 cup raw.

- Kale
- Spinach
- Collards
- Green tea
- Swiss chard
- Brussels sprouts
- Turnip and mustard greens
- Cabbage
- Broccoli
- Watercress
- Endive lettuce
- Romaine lettuce
- Green leaf lettuce
- Soybeans/edamame

Other foods may contain smaller amounts of vitamin K.

Nutritional Drinks, Meal Replacement Shakes, and Weight Loss Shakes
Meal replacement, weight loss, nutritional drinks or shakes may have high amounts of vitamin K per serving If you start to use one of these products, tell your warfarin manager. The drinks listed below have vitamin K. This is **not** a complete list.

- Boost®
- Carnation Breakfast Essentials®
- Ensure®
- Glucerna®
- Slim Fast®

Tell your warfarin manager if your food intake changes due to illness or if you plan to change your diet either short or long term. They may watch your INR more closely.

Vitamin K Content in Food

M = Medium H = High

Food	Serving Size	Vitamin K content (in mcgs)
Fats and Dressings		
Margarine	1 Tbsp	M (10)
Mayonnaise	1 Tbsp	M (5)
Soybean, canola, and salad oils	1 Tbsp	M (20)
Olive oil	1 Tbsp	M (10)
Fruits		
Blueberries	1 cup	M (25)
Grapes	1 cup	M (20)
Vegetables		
Asparagus	5 spears	M (40)
Avocado	1 small	M (30)
Broccoli	1 cup	H (220)
Brussels sprouts	5 sprouts	H (200)
Cabbage	1 cup	M (40)
Cabbage, red	1 cup	M (30)
Collard greens	1 cup	H (840)
Endive (raw)	1 cup	H (115)
Green Beans	1 cup	M (15)
Green scallion (raw)	1 cup	H (200)
Kale leaf (raw)	1 cup	H (550)
Lettuce, bib, red leaf, romaine (raw)	1 cup	H (65)
Lettuce, iceberg (raw)	2 cups	M (30)
Mustard greens (raw)	1 cup	H (280)
Parsley	1/4 cup	H (245)
Peas, green (cooked)	2/3 cup	M (40)
Soybeans	1 cup	H (90)
Swiss chard	1 cup	H (300)
Spinach leaf (raw)	1cup	H (145)
Spinach (cooked)	1 cup	H (900)
Turnip greens (raw)	1 cup	H (140)
Watercress (raw)	1 cup	H (85)
Condiments		
Dill pickle	1 cup	M (25)
Other		
Cashews	1 cup	M (45)

Warfarin Administration Pearls

Warfarin is a hazardous medicine that should be handled with caution:

- Anyone able to become pregnant should not handle this medicine unless proper protection is worn.
- If crushing warfarin tablets, caregivers should wear rubber gloves, a mask, and eye protection to avoid medicine exposure.
- If warfarin is crushed and to be administered through a feeding tube, ensure warfarin is administered consistently with or without feeds.
- If the patient is on continuous tube feeds, recommend holding tube feeds 1 hour prior to and 1 hour following administration of warfarin.

Blood Clots or Stroke

Warfarin is often used to stop or treat blood clots or to prevent a stroke. You should still be aware of the signs and symptoms of blot clots and strokes.

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)

DVT is a blood clot that occurs in the leg or arm. Symptoms include:

- Pain or tenderness in limb.
- Swelling or redness in limb.
- Skin warm to touch.

Pulmonary Embolism (PE)

PE is a type of blood clot in the lung. Symptoms include:

- Chest pain.
- Feeling short of breath.
- Cough (with or without blood).
- Fast breathing.
- Fast heart rate.
- Low grade fever or mild sweating.

Stroke

Symptoms of a stroke include a sudden onset of:

- A headache (described as the worst headache you ever had).
- Changes in vision.
- Feeling weak on one side of the body.
- Slurred speech or trouble speaking.
- Confusion.

Symptoms of a Blood Clot or Stroke

If you have symptoms of a blood clot or stroke, this is a medical emergency. **Call 911 right away.**

Emergencies

Go to the closest emergency room right away if you have:

- Fallen and hit your head.
- An INR greater than 9.9.
- Signs of major bleeding.
- Signs of a blood clot or stroke.
- Chest pain or feel short of breath.

Resources

Learn more with these web-based resources:

UW Health – Anticoagulation Services
http://www.uwhealth.org/anticoagulation

National Blood Clot Alliance
http://www.stoptheclot.org

North American Thrombosis Forum
https://thrombosis.org/patients

American Heart Association – Atrial Fibrillation
https://supportnetwork.heart.org/s/myafibmain

American Heart Association – Heart Valves
https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/heart-valve-problems-and-disease

Warfarin Quiz

Select the best answer for each question.

1. What is the name of the blood test used to monitor warfarin levels?
    a. INR
    b. Platelet count
    c. Red blood cell count

2. How often do you need a blood test?
    a. Once a year.
    b. At regular intervals, decided on by my doctor or clinic.
    c. Only after a dose change.

3. If your INR is high, you may be at risk for:
    a. Clotting
    b. Serious bleeding
    c. Heart attack

4. What should you do if you miss a dose of warfarin?
    a. Take my dose as soon as I remember on the same day. If it is the next day, I will just resume my normal dosing and tell my healthcare provider.
    b. Nothing- it is okay to skip one dose.
    c. Take an extra pill to "catch up".

5. What should you do if you want to take an over-the-counter medicine or supplement?
    a. I can't take any over-the-counter medicines or vitamins while on warfarin.
    b. Go ahead and start the new medicines, your provider does not need to know.
    c. Call my provider and ask if the new item will be safe with warfarin.

6. What should you do if you really enjoy eating spinach or other green, leafy vegetables?
    a. Stop eating them altogether.
    b. Only eat them if INR is high.
    c. Be constant with the amount that I eat.
    d. Just eat 1 big bowl per month.

7. Who should you tell that you take warfarin?
    a. All of my doctors
    b. My dentist
    c. My pharmacist
    d. All of the above

Quiz Answers

1. A
2. B
3. B
4. A
5. C
6. C
7. D

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 6/2025 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#6900

Warfarin Emergency Pocket Card

Keep this card in your wallet or purse in case of emergencies. It allows emergency workers to know that you are on warfarin.

I am using warfarin, an anticoagulant. **Please tell this right away to anyone providing medical care to me.**
Name:
Birth date: **Weight:** **Blood Type:**
On warfarin for:
Medical Conditions:
In an emergency, please notify:
Name:
Relationship:
Address:
Phone: ( )
Doctor's Name:
Doctor's Phone: ( )