

Warfarin (Coumadin[®])

UC DAVIS HEALTH

UC Davis Anticoagulation Clinic
Monday- Friday 8-4:30
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Important Points

- Take your warfarin exactly as directed
- **GET YOUR INR CHECKED AS SCHEDULED**
- Watch for signs of bleeding
- Keep your diet consistent
- Contact your Health Care Provider if you experience:
 - Difficulty breathing or chest pain
 - Cough or throwing up blood
 - A serious fall or head injury
 - Illness, fever, or infection that worsens
 - Swelling or pain
 - Weakness or dizziness
- If you miss a pill, **DO NOT** take an extra pill to catch up unless your Health Care Provider directs you to
- Avoid excessive alcohol use or binge drinking
- Do not make any major lifestyle changes without consulting your Health Care Provider
- **IF YOU ARE PREGNANT OR PLAN ON BECOMING PREGNANT DO NOT TAKE WARFARIN**

Introduction

You have been started on the medication warfarin (Coumadin®). While you are on this medication you will need to be watched carefully. You will need to have regular blood tests and notify your health care provider of any questions. Your health care provider will work with you to keep you safe and healthy while you are taking warfarin.

The more you know about this medication, the better team you and your health care provider will make together. Please take some time to read all of the information in this booklet.

What is warfarin (Coumadin®)?

Warfarin sodium is an anticoagulant. “Anti” means against and “coagulant” means clotting. Sometimes this drug is called a blood thinner. An anticoagulant helps to prevent clots from forming in the blood.

What does your warfarin (Coumadin®) look like?

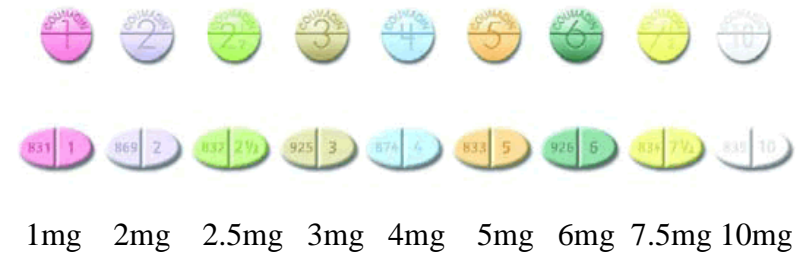
Why you need to take warfarin?

Your body forms blood clots to help you stop bleeding. Sometimes your body may make a blood clot that you do not need. Blood clots may form in veins, arteries or even in the chambers of your heart or on your heart valves.

Some of the conditions for which warfarin is used include:

- Atrial fibrillation (afib) / stroke prevention
- Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)
- Pulmonary embolus (PE)
- Heart valve replacement
- Hip or knee replacement
- Heart attack
- Peripheral vascular disease (PVD)

Tablet Strength	Tablet Color
1mg	Pink
2mg	Purple
2.5mg	Green
3mg	Tan
4mg	Blue
5mg	Peach
6 mg	Teal
7.5mg	Yellow
10mg	White



Use of Other Medications

When warfarin is taken with other medicines, it can change the way warfarin works. It is very important to talk with your doctor about all of the other medicines that you are taking, including over-the-counter medicines, antibiotics, vitamins, or herbal products.

Some over-the-counter drugs that may affect warfarin include:

- Aspirin or aspirin containing products
- Ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil)
- Naproxen (Aleve)
- Vitamin or herbal supplements



Taking Warfarin

Always take your pills as directed. The amount of warfarin each person needs is different and is based on a blood test called an INR (International Normalized Ratio) or protime. The amount of medication you take may change over time, based on this blood test. Warfarin needs to be taken at the same time, usually in the evening. If you miss a dose take it as soon as you remember. If you don't remember till the next day, skip the missed dose and let your health care provider know.

Blood Tests

When you start taking warfarin you may need a blood test every day for a few days. Once your healthcare provider finds the dosage that is right for you, the blood tests will be less frequent.

The INR test measures how fast your blood is clotting and lets the doctor know if your dosage should change. If your blood test is too high, you might be at risk for bleeding problems. If it is too low, you might be at risk for forming clots. Your doctor has decided on a goal for your blood test that is right for you. Because your dose is based on the INR

blood test, it is very important that you get your blood tested when you are asked.

My Goal INR is _____

What are the possible side effects?

Side effects with warfarin are not common, but bleeding is the most common. Very minor bleeding may occur even when your INR is in your goal range.

This may include:

- Small bruises
- Slight gum bleeding when brushing teeth
- Occasional nose bleed
- Bleeding after a minor cut that stops within minutes

If you are experiencing something abnormal that you feel may be caused by your warfarin, please contact your health care provider.

Major bleeding includes:

- Red, dark, coffee colored urine
- Bowel movements that are red or look like tar
- Bleeding that does not stop after 10 minutes
- Vomit that is coffee colored or bright red
- A serious fall or hit on the head

IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY MAJOR BLEEDING CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR OR GO STRAIGHT TO THE HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM.

Do I need to change my diet?

It is important to eat a balanced, consistent diet while taking warfarin. Warfarin interacts with vitamin K (a vitamin found naturally in foods), so you need to keep vitamin K intake constant from day to day. Avoid sudden large increases or decreases in your intake of foods high in vitamin K (such as broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, spinach, and other green leafy vegetables). It is also important to avoid herbal products and dietary supplements that may affect vitamin K and warfarin unless approved by your healthcare provider

Alcohol can also affect your warfarin, but it does not mean you must avoid all alcohol. Serious problems can occur with alcohol and warfarin if you suddenly change the amount of alcohol you drink.

