Things to Know When Taking Warfarin (Coumadin®)
Anticoagulation Therapy
About Warfarin (Coumadin®)

Your doctor wants you to take warfarin because you have a blood clot or you have a medical condition that increases your risk of forming blood clots. Warfarin is an anticoagulant, or blood thinner, that helps prevent clots from forming in blood vessels and in the heart. Blood clots can put you at risk for a heart attack, stroke, or other serious medical problems. Warfarin does not stop your blood from clotting completely.

You are taking warfarin for: ________________________________________________________

There are different types of anticoagulants. The most common anticoagulant that doctors prescribe is warfarin. Your doctor may also discuss using one of the newer blood thinners depending on your individual situation.

Your Anticoagulation Care Team

Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin pharmacists, nurses and doctors work together to form your anticoagulation team. We make sure you stay safe while taking your blood thinner. Our phone lines are open during business hours every weekday. We also have a pharmacist on call for any urgent concerns outside of these hours that cannot wait until the next business day. Follow the phone prompts to connect with the on call pharmacist.

Anticoagulation Clinic Phone Number: 414-805-6575
**Information About Blood Clots**

If a blood clot forms in one of your blood vessels, it can be very dangerous. Examples of dangerous clots include stroke, pulmonary embolism (PE) and deep vein thrombosis (DVT).

**Stroke**

The most common type of stroke happens when a blood clot forms in your brain or a clot forms in another part of your body and then travels to your brain. A stroke is a medical emergency and can cause death. Treatment is needed quickly.

**Know the signs of a stroke!**

**BE FAST**

- **BALANCE**: Sudden loss of coordination or balance
- **EYES**: Sudden change in vision
- **FACE**: Sudden weakness on one side of the face or facial droop
- **ARM**: Sudden arm or leg weakness or numbness
- **SPEECH**: Sudden slurred speech, trouble speaking, trouble understanding speech
- **TERRIBLE HEADACHE**: Sudden onset of a terrible headache

**TIME TO CALL 9-1-1**

Every second counts!
Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)

A DVT is a blood clot in a leg or arm vein. Signs of a DVT:

- Pain, swelling or redness in your arm or leg
- Skin may feel warm or tender or hurts to touch

Pulmonary Embolism (PE)

A PE is a blood clot in a lung vein.

Signs of a PE:

- Sudden shortness of breath
- Chest pain when you take a breath in
- Cough with mucus that can be bloody
- Fast heartbeat

Blood Testing

- While you are taking warfarin, you need to have your blood tested to measure your INR (International Normalized Ratio). An INR measures how fast your blood clots and lets us know if your warfarin dose needs to be changed. For your safety, your provider will decide the INR range that is best for you.
- At each visit we will determine when the next blood test is needed.
- Too much warfarin in your body could cause you to bleed more easily. This could happen if your INR is too high.
- Too little warfarin in your body could cause a blood clot. This could happen if your INR is too low.
- Your INR goal range is: _______ to _______

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Best Range</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May cause a blood clot</td>
<td></td>
<td>May cause bleeding</td>
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</table>
INR Monitoring Options
You have three options for INR monitoring:
1. Fingerstick test with immediate results at an Anticoagulation Clinic location
2. Lab visit with a blood draw and a follow up phone call
3. Self test option for patients that meet qualifications

Taking Warfarin
• Always take your warfarin at the same time each day
• Always follow the instructions given to you by the anticoagulation clinic. Do not follow the instructions on your warfarin bottle as these may not always be the most up to date instructions.
• Never skip a dose of warfarin and never take two doses of warfarin at one time unless your warfarin team tells you to do this.
• If you miss a dose and it is within 12 hours of the time that you normally take it, take that dose.
• Call your warfarin care team for directions on what to do if it is longer than 12 hours from when you normally take your dose or you have other questions.
• Keep track of any missed doses on a calendar.
• Consider using a pillbox to keep track of your daily dosing.
Keep Taking Other Medications

Many medications might interact with your warfarin. Some can decrease the effectiveness of your warfarin while others can cause bleeding problems.

- Contact us if you start, stop, or change any prescription or over-the-counter medications.
- Ask your provider or the Anticoagulation Clinic before taking any of these over-the-counter medications which can interact with warfarin:
  - Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) in doses over 2000mg per day (Four extra-strength tablets or six regular-strength tablets)
  - Omeprazole (Prilosec®) or Lansoprazole (Prevacid®)
  - Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®)
  - Naproxen (Aleve®, Naprosyn®)
  - Aspirin, Excedrin®, Alka-Seltzer® or other Aspirin containing products
  - Any cold and flu products containing the above ingredients
  - Cimetidine
  - Pepto Bismol®

Taking Herbal Products and Supplements

There are many herbal products and supplements that can interact with your warfarin. Some can decrease the effectiveness of your warfarin while others can cause bleeding problems.

- Contact us if you start, stop, or change any herbal product or supplement
Table 1: Examples of herbal products and supplements that can raise or lower INR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking these products can lower your INR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ginseng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multivitamin with Vitamin K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John’s Wort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking these products can raise your INR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cannabis (CBD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranberry supplements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garlic supplements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginger supplements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glucosamine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw Palmetto</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turmeric</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possible Warfarin Side Effects

- Unusual bruising or bruises that continue to grow.
- Unusual Bleeding. This includes:
  - Menstrual bleeding that is much heavier than normal
  - Red or brown colored urine
  - Red or black tarry colored stools
  - Unusual bleeding from the gums
  - Vomit that is brown or red
  - Nose bleeds
What Can Cause Nosebleeds

- Dry air
- A lot of nose-blowing from a cold or allergies
- Injury to the nose
- Nose-picking
- High blood pressure

How to prevent nosebleeds

- Keep your nostrils moist with a thin layer of a water-based lubricant (such as Ayr® or KY Jelly®) or saline nasal spray.
- Use a humidifier.
- Do not pick your nose.

How to treat nosebleeds

1. First, try to stay calm. A person who is agitated may bleed more profusely than someone who has been reassured and supported. Then:
2. Sit or stand upright and lean slightly forward. DO NOT lie down or tilt your head back. Keep the head higher than the level of the heart.
3. Using two fingers, pinch the soft part of both nostrils.
4. Place crushed ice in a plastic bag or washcloth. Apply ice to nose and cheeks.
5. Keep holding your nose shut for 15 minutes without releasing the pressure until the time is up. Use a clock to time yourself. Breathe through your mouth.
6. After 15 minutes, release fingers and check for bleeding.
7. If bleeding has not stopped:
   - If you have Afrin (oxymetazoline) nasal spray, spray into nose OR soak a cotton ball with nasal spray and place it into the nostril.
   - Apply pressure again for 15 more minutes.
8. If steady bleeding has not stopped after a total of 30 minutes, call your doctor or anticoagulation care team or go to urgent care or the ED.

When is a nosebleed serious?

You should see a doctor or nurse right away if your nosebleed:

- Causes blood to gush out of your nose or makes it hard to breathe.
- Causes you to turn very pale, or makes you tired or confused.
- Happens right after surgery on your nose, or if you know you have a tumor or other growth in your nose.
- Happens with other serious symptoms, such as chest pain.
• Happens after an injury, such as being hit in the face.
• If you have chest pain, feel woozy, or if you are bleeding a lot, you should call 911 (do not drive yourself to the hospital).

Call your warfarin care team if you have:
• Any unusual bruising and bleeding.
• Any change with any of your medicines or supplements
• Any scheduled procedure or surgery. For some procedures or surgeries, you will need to stop your warfarin before the procedure and restart it after the procedure. We will help coordinate this for you.
• A big change in your diet or appetite
• A bad cold, fever, diarrhea or vomiting
• Plans for getting pregnant or you think you may be pregnant. Warfarin can be harmful to your baby if taken during pregnancy.

• Do not stop taking warfarin until you are told to do so.

Go to urgent care or the emergency department if you:
• Have signs or symptoms of a DVT, PE or stroke
• Have serious bleeding [for example, bloody diarrhea; vomiting blood (may look like coffee grounds); coughing up blood; red or dark urine; or dark, sticky (tarry) stools]
• Hit your head or have a serious injury, accident or fall; you may be bleeding on the inside even if you do not see blood

Dietary Considerations
Some foods and drinks can alter INR. Talk with your Anticoagulation Team about big changes to your diet and weight loss programs. You should be consistent with how much you have of these foods and drinks.

• **Foods High in Vitamin K.** Vitamin K changes how Warfarin works. You do not need to avoid these foods, but you should eat similar amounts of high Vitamin K foods each week to keep your INR in your goal range.

• **Alcohol.** Alcohol can affect your INR. Drinking alcohol while taking a blood thinner can increase your risk of bleeding. We recommend you limit intake to not more than one alcoholic drink per day for women or not more than two alcoholic drinks per day for men. Examples of one drink is 12 ounces of a 5% beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80 proof liquor.

• **Nutritional Supplement Drinks**
There are other foods and drinks that can alter INR, especially if you have a large amount of them. See table below.

Always contact the Anticoagulation Clinic to discuss changes and get more details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetables</th>
<th>Other foods or drinks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asparagus</td>
<td>Beef liver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>Green tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brussels Sprouts</td>
<td>Soy milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage (red, green and coleslaw)</td>
<td>Nutritional supplements (such as Boost®, Ensure®, Carnation Instant Breakfast®)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greens (mustard, collard, turnip, beet)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lettuces (such as romaine, green leaf, endive and watercress)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Okra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parsley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swiss Chard</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinach</td>
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</table>

**Having more of these foods and drinks can lower your INR. Having less of these foods and drinks can raise your INR.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Having more of these drinks can raise your INR. Having less of these drinks can lower your INR.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcoholic spirits/cocktails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MyChart

The MyChart patient portal gives you convenient online access to your health care team. You can view results, ask questions and request prescription renewals and appointments. To get started, go to my.froedtert.com and click on “Create New Account”. If you need assistance, email us at digitalsupportteam@froedtert.com or call 414-777-0900.

Please visit the Anticoagulation Clinic’s website at froedtert.com for locations and services.

We encourage you to wear a medical-alert bracelet/necklace and carry a medical alert card with you at all times.

Warfarin Emergency Card

Fill in emergency card and keep in your wallet or purse:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Case of Emergency:</th>
<th>My Name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am taking the <strong>blood thinner Warfarin</strong> <em>(Coumadin)</em> for:</td>
<td>Doctor:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doctor Phone:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emergency Contact:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Phone:</td>
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