

PATIENT
INFORMATION

Medicine To Treat: _____

Cardiac Diseases

Warfarin



WHAT IS WARFARIN USED FOR?

Warfarin is an anticoagulant, sometimes called a blood thinner. However, it does not thin the blood or dissolve clots that have already formed. Instead it prevents clot formation and existing clots from getting bigger, while letting the body's natural processes dissolve the clots. Warfarin helps to treat or prevent clots in the veins, arteries, lungs or the heart.

You should find out from your doctor or pharmacist why you need this medicine to prevent blood from clotting more easily, and how long you would need to take warfarin for your condition.

There are different brands of warfarin available in the market (e.g. Marevan[®], Coumadin[®]). Do not switch brands because they may have slightly different effectiveness.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE THE MEDICINE?

Take warfarin tablets by mouth with a drink of water. Follow the directions on the prescription label. Take your doses at a regular time, once a day. Always take the medicine in the same manner either before or after meals.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FORGET A DOSE?

Try not to miss doses. **If you do miss a dose, take it as soon as you can if it is within 8 hours of your usual time to take the warfarin.** If it is after 8 hours, do not take that dose. Just continue to take your warfarin at the usual time the next day. **Do not take double doses**, and do not take two doses in one day unless the doctor tells you to; this can cause excessive bleeding.

Keep all medication out of reach of children.

Please record all missed doses and inform your doctor at your next appointment.

WHAT SIDE EFFECTS CAN THIS MEDICINE CAUSE?

Serious effects of the medicine overdose include:

- blood in urine, cloudy or dark urine
- black, sticky/gluey stools
- heavy menstrual bleeding
- unusual bruising or bleeding from gums, nose and when you cough; red spots on the skin

Inform your doctor as soon as you can if you notice any of these symptoms.

WHAT PRECAUTIONS SHOULD I FOLLOW?

Visit your doctor for regular checks on your blood. Frequent blood tests may be necessary initially in order to determine a suitable dose for you. While you are taking warfarin, carry an identification card/book with your name, name and dose of medicine(s) being used, and name and phone number of your doctor or person to contact in an emergency. If you are taking warfarin long term, you should apply for a Medic A was card. This will inform any healthcare professional that you are on warfarin, especially in case of an emergency.

Do not start or stop taking any medicine without first consulting your doctor or pharmacist as certain medicines (e.g. Aspirin, certain antibiotics and painkillers) may have an effect on warfarin.

Discard all medication that is outdated or no longer required.

WHAT FOODS/DRUGS SHOULD I AVOID?

Eat a normal balanced diet while you are taking warfarin. Avoid making any major changes to your diet (e.g. becoming a vegetarian) without first consulting your doctor or pharmacist.

Avoid a sudden drastic increase in intake of soybean products (e.g. tauhu), green tea and the following vegetables: broccoli, spinach, brussels sprouts, cauliflower and chickpeas.

Avoid excessive alcohol consumption. It is advisable not to take more than 5 cans of beer or more than 1 bottle of wine per week.

Avoid any form of traditional and herbal remedies (e.g. ginkgo) as the effect of these medicines on warfarin is unpredictable.

DO I NEED TO MAKE ANY MAJOR LIFESTYLE CHANGES?

No. However, be extra cautious when handling razors or other sharp objects. Try to avoid contact sports or other activities, which may cause you to be injured. When you have a cut, you will need to apply pressure for a longer period to stop the bleeding.

HOW SHOULD I STORE MY MEDICINE?

You should keep your medication in a tight, light resistant container at room temperature. Protect from light.