

Warfarin

Introduction

Warfarin is a blood-thinning medication. It decreases the ability of the body to form harmful clots. Your health care provider will give you enough warfarin to thin your blood without thinning it too much. Blood that is too thin or too thick can cause further problems. This reference summary explains warfarin. It talks about how to take warfarin and when to call your health care provider.



Usage

Always take the dosage of warfarin prescribed by your health care provider at the same time each day.

Your health care provider will give you enough warfarin to thin your blood without thinning it too much. If the blood is not thin enough, blood clots inside the blood vessels and heart may form. If the blood is too thin, you risk a longer bleeding time. Longer bleeding can result in severe loss of blood if the person is involved in an accident. Severe blood loss can be fatal.



Take the amount of warfarin prescribed by your health care provider and check how thin your blood is on a regular basis.

Instructions

To keep your blood as thin as it should be, you should keep your eating habits and exercise level regular. Check with your health care provider before taking any new medications, especially over-the-counter medications and antibiotics. Tell your new health care provider that you are on warfarin, especially if any type of surgery or injection is contemplated. Tell your health care provider if you are pregnant or may become pregnant.

This document is for informational purposes and is not intended to be a substitute for the advice of a doctor or healthcare professional or a recommendation for any particular treatment plan. Like any printed material, it may become out of date over time. It is important that you rely on the advice of a doctor or a healthcare professional for your specific condition.

If you miss a dose of warfarin, do not take an extra pill to catch up.

It is important to keep the amount of Vitamin K in your diet steady. Eat a consistent amount of green vegetables every day. It is important to have protime checked regularly. Your health care provider will tell you how frequently you should have this blood test performed.



When to Call Your Health Care Provider

Certain side effects of warfarin are normal, including:

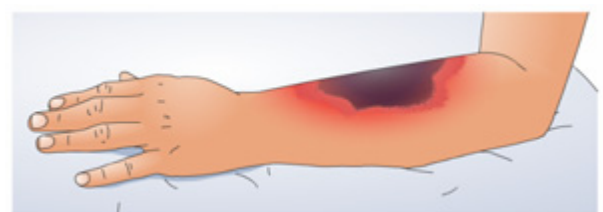
- Bloating.
- Changes in how things taste.
- Chills or feeling cold.
- Gas or pain in your abdomen.
- Hair loss.

If these side effects become severe or do not go away, contact your health care provider. Even if you are taking the prescribed amount of warfarin, dangerous internal bleeding or blood clots can still happen. It is important to report to your health care provider any signs of internal bleeding or blood clots. You or one of your family members or friends should call your health care provider if you have a serious fall or you hit your head, especially if you develop a headache or if you become sleepy or weak.

If you notice any blood in your urine or stools or if the urine or stool turns very dark, call your health care provider. If you notice unusual bruising, large areas of bruising or black and blue marks on your skin for unknown reasons, you should tell your health care provider. This may mean that you are bleeding under your skin. Small bruises that result from minor accidents, such as a leg hitting furniture, are normal and do not require a call to the health care provider.



Small Bruise



Large Bruise

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Check with your health care provider if you experience:

- Dizziness.
- Trouble breathing.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- More weakness or tiredness than usual.

These can be the signs of blood loss and anemia.

Call your health care provider when there is bleeding that does not stop from cuts or from your nose after 7 minutes.

Contact your health care provider right away if you experience:

- A rash.
- Hoarseness.
- Hives.
- Itching.
- Swallowing problems.

If you experience flu-like symptoms, contact your health care provider right away. These include:

- Diarrhea.
- Nausea.
- Vomiting.



You should call your health care provider right away if you have:

- An infection.
- Loss of appetite.
- Pain in the upper right side of the stomach.
- Yellowish eyes or skin.

Call your health care provider right away if you notice swelling in your:

- Eyes.
- Face.
- Throat.
- Tongue.
- Lips.



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You should also contact your health care provider if your hands, feet, ankles or lower legs are swollen.

Call your health care provider if you notice more bleeding than usual when you brush or floss your teeth. If you are a woman who menstruates, tell your health care provider if you notice more bleeding than usual when you get your menstrual period or bleeding between periods.

If you have a high fever or an illness that seems to be getting worse, check with your health care provider. You should also check with your health care provider if you notice any blood when you cough or vomit, or if you have loose or runny stools or have an infection with high fevers and chills.

Summary

Warfarin is a blood-thinning medication. It decreases the ability of the body to form harmful clots. Your health care provider will give you enough warfarin to thin your blood without thinning it too much. If the blood is not thin enough, blood clots inside the blood vessels and heart may form. If the blood is too thin, you risk a longer bleeding time.

It is important to keep the amount of Vitamin K in your diet steady. Eat a consistent amount of green vegetables every day. It is also important to exercise regularly.

Even if you are taking the prescribed amount of warfarin, dangerous internal bleeding or blood clots can still happen. Report to your health care provider any signs of internal bleeding or blood clots. Call your health care provider if you notice unusual bleeding, bruising, dizziness or chest pain.

Communicating with your health care provider can help you use warfarin in a way that best treats your blood clots.



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