

Get to know warfarin —

make it work effectively for you



“Get the best from your warfarin therapy”

Five questions you should ask while on warfarin:

1. Why do I need to take warfarin, and for how long?

2. Why do I need to tell ALL of my health care providers about ALL the medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements I am taking?

3. Does taking warfarin affect what I can eat and drink?

4. How often should I get my blood tested and what should my INR be?

5. What signs or symptoms should prompt me to seek medical attention?

Always ask “Is this OK to take/do while I am on warfarin?”

This newsletter has been produced by the Tasmanian School of Pharmacy, Unit for Medication Outcomes, Research and Education. Information in this resource has been adapted from the Veterans’ Medicine Advice and Therapeutic Education Services and the Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement

Welcome to the second edition of Warfarin Words. This newsletter aims to answer all your questions about warfarin and related issues. If you have anything you’d like us to cover in future issues please let us know—email: info@anticoagulation.com.au

Warfarin Basics

For more detailed information visit www.anticoagulation.com.au or speak with your doctor or pharmacist.

WHAT IS WARFARIN?

- Warfarin is a medicine that lowers the risk of blood clots forming in your body.
- Blood tests are needed to monitor the effects of warfarin.
- Bleeding is the most common side effect of warfarin.

TAKING WARFARIN SAFELY

- There are two brands of warfarin. These are not the same, so don’t change brands.
- If you plan to become pregnant, talk to your doctor first.

- If you miss a dose take the missed dose as soon as possible. If you do not remember until the next day, skip the missed dose. Take your next dose as normal. Never take a double dose.

BLOOD TESTS

- You need to have regular blood tests called INR tests. The frequency of the tests will change over the course of your treatment.
- The dose of warfarin is worked out based on the INR results.

WARFARIN AND BLEEDING

- Contact your doctor if you have any signs of unusual bleeding.
- Tell all health professionals that you are taking warfarin so they can make appropriate decisions about the medicines and medical procedures best for you.
- Think about ways you can do your normal activities without increasing the risk of hurting yourself e.g. wear gloves while gardening.

Things that affect warfarin

OTHER MEDICINE

- Many medicines can change the way warfarin works. This includes prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins and herbal supplements. Ask your doctor or

pharmacist before starting, changing, or stopping medicines.

DIET (*this will be covered in more detail in the next edition*)

- Certain foods will change the way warfarin works. Do not make significant

changes to your diet while taking warfarin; try to eat a regular balanced diet.

- Drink no more than 1-2 standard alcoholic drinks per day, with at least 2 alcohol free days per week.