



Warfarin (Coumadin®)

**Things to Remember
When Taking Warfarin**



University Health Care
Thrombosis Service

✓ **Instructions**

1. Warfarin pills come in different colors.

Each color is a different dose (mg). Be sure your pills are the right color, or dose, when you pick them up from the pharmacy. If any of the following things are different than you expect them to be let your health care provider and pharmacist know:

- The dose of your pills is different
- The color of your pills changes
- The shape of your pills changes

The dose of your warfarin pills is:

The color of your pills is:

2. Take warfarin once a day in the evening.

3. If you miss a dose:

- Take your dose if it has been less than 8 hours from the time you normally take it.
- If it has been more than 8 hours from the time you normally take it, skip the dose and take it at your next regular time.
- Do not double up on pills to make up for a dose you miss.

- Contact your providers to let them know if you miss a dose, or accidentally take an extra dose.

✓ **Keep a record of:**

- How much warfarin you take each day
- The date and result of your blood tests
- Any medicines you take
- Big changes in what you eat

✓ **Blood Tests**

You need regular blood tests while you are taking warfarin.

The test is called an INR. It tells the provider how long it takes your blood to clot.

Your next blood test is:

You will get blood tests at:

The phone number is:

Your warfarin will be followed by:

The phone number is:

After your blood test, you will get instructions from your provider about how much warfarin to take. Talk to your provider so you have a plan for getting these instructions after each INR test. They will tell you whether to keep taking the same amount of warfarin or what changes to make.

✓ **When you talk to your provider, ask:**

1. What is my INR level?
2. Do I need to change my dose of warfarin?
3. What is my new dose?
4. When do I need to have my blood drawn again?

Write these things down.

✓ **When to call your provider:**

1. If any of your medicines change:
 - Do not start, stop, or change any of your medicines without talking to your provider or pharmacist first. This includes over-the-counter medicines. There are a lot of medicines that can change your INR level and you may need your blood drawn more often.

2. If you change what you eat or drink:

- Eat a consistent diet. Try to eat the same number of green, leafy vegetables every week.
- Limit your alcohol to no more than 2 drinks a day. 1 drink = 12 oz. beer, 4 oz. wine or 1 shot of hard alcohol.

3. If your health changes:

- Changes in health can also change your INR. Call your provider for any changes in your health.

✓ **Side Effects:**
Bleeding

The most common side effect of warfarin is bleeding.

Some bleeding is minor, like:

- Bleeding gums when brushing your teeth
- Small nose bleeds that stop right away
- Easy bruising
- Longer or heavier menstrual periods

You do not need to see your health care provider for minor bleeding. If you are worried that your bleeding is serious, call your provider (doctor, nurse, pharmacist, physician's assistant, etc).

Some bleeding is major, like:

- Red or bloody urine
- Black, red, or tarry (look like tar) stools
- Throwing up or coughing up blood
- Severe headaches
- New pain or swelling
- If you have major bleeding get medical help right away.

Call your health care provider about any changes you are worried about.

✓ **Blood Clots**

It is still possible to get a blood clot while you are on blood thinners.

Symptoms of a blood clot may be any of the following:

- New or sudden increase in warmth, pain, or swelling in your arms or legs
- Difficulty breathing or sudden increase in shortness of breath
- Chest pain, discomfort, or tightness
- Weakness, numbness, or tingling in your arms or legs

✓ **Everyone needs to know you take warfarin.**

If you are going to be on warfarin for a long time, you may want to get a medical alert bracelet.

✓ **If you need surgery, a procedure, or dental work, contact your warfarin provider.**

You may need to change how much warfarin you take.

Note: The term “provider” used in this brochure refers to the person who is taking care of you for your anticoagulation. This could be your doctor, your pharmacist, your nurse, etc.

Thrombosis Service
(24-hour pager):
1-800-783-3735

Thrombosis Center:
(801) 585-3713

Redwood
Anticoagulation Clinic:
(801) 213-9150

Thrombosis
Research Group
(24-hour pager):
(801) 339-5005

www.healthcare.utah.edu/thrombosis

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