

HSS

YOUR PATHWAY TO RECOVERY

A Patient's Guide to Coumadin® (Warfarin) Therapy



Your Pathway to Recovery: A Patient's Guide to Coumadin® Therapy

Developed by Members of the Coumadin® Strategic Improvement Process Team In Collaboration with the
Interdisciplinary Patient/Family Centered Education Committee

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Your Pathway to Recovery: A Patient's Guide to Coumadin® Therapy

This educational booklet was developed by our staff for your safety. Our goal is to help you and your family better understand and manage your care while taking the medication Coumadin® (warfarin).

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Your Personal Coumadin® Therapy Record

Name of home care agency that will draw blood samples

Telephone and fax number of lab that will process blood samples

Telephone _____ **Fax Number** _____

Name and phone number of health care provider responsible for managing Coumadin®

YOUR PERSONAL COUMADIN® THERAPY RECORD

Date	Coumadin Dose	INR or Protime	Date or Next Lab Test
Monday, May 1	5 Mg	14.2 protime 2.5 INR	Tuesday, May 2
	Mg		
	Mg		
	Mg		
	Mg		
	Mg		
	Mg		

Your Personal Coumadin® Therapy Record

Date	Coumadin Dose	INR or Protime	Date or Next Lab Test
	Mg		
	Mg		
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	Mg		
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Your Personal Coumadin® Therapy Record

Date	Coumadin Dose	INR or Prottime	Date or Next Lab Test
	Mg		
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Length of Therapy • Medication Dosing

WHAT IS COUMADIN®?

Coumadin® is an oral anticoagulant. It works by “thinning” the blood. The active ingredient in Coumadin is **warfarin**. Anticoagulants can be used to treat existing blood clots. They can also be prescribed to prevent clots from forming after orthopedic surgery. Patients who have a prior history or a family history of cardiac disease (or other medical conditions that increase the risk of blood clot formation) may also require treatment with an anticoagulant such as Coumadin®.

Length of Therapy

When prescribed for prevention, such as after your orthopedic surgery, you may only need to take this medication for 4 to 6 weeks. Some patients may need to take it longer. The length of treatment will be determined by your healthcare provider. Follow-up care after your hospital stay is extremely important! Before you leave the hospital, our staff will identify the healthcare provider who will be monitoring your Coumadin® therapy. It may be your HSS medical doctor, your local physician, or another HSS healthcare provider. When you are discharged from HSS, you will receive a “Coumadin® Discharge Form” that includes this healthcare provider’s name and phone number as well as other important information. Do not leave HSS without it!

Medication Dosing

The dose of Coumadin® will vary from patient to patient and may change from time to time. There are various reasons for this. Different medical conditions require different therapeutic levels of Coumadin®. The prescribed dose of medication is based on how your body processes the medication. Do also not be concerned if your healthcare provider changes the dose frequently.

Your healthcare provider determines how much Coumadin® you need to take based on your blood test results. Two blood tests are used to determine how thick or thin your blood is (how long it takes your blood to clot). They are called the Prothrombin Time (PT) or “Protime” for short, and the International Normalized Ratio (INR). Higher PT or INR values means that your blood is less likely to clot (your blood is thinner). When you are on Coumadin® therapy, your

healthcare provider’s goal is to establish a therapeutic level, to keep you in a range that is not too thin or too thick. When Coumadin® therapy begins, these lab tests will be performed daily during your hospital stay. Once you are discharged from the hospital, lab tests will be performed once or twice weekly until your healthcare provider has established your therapeutic level. The dose of Coumadin® is continually adjusted based on your lab results. Once a therapeutic level is established, the lab tests may be done less frequently.

When to Take Coumadin

It is best to take your Coumadin® at the same time every evening (approximately **9:00 PM**). Taking this medication in the evening allows the lab enough time to run the test and provide results to your healthcare provider, so that your healthcare provider can then prescribe the proper dosage of medication.

Remember, your dose may change from time to time. Keep a daily medication record. We have provided a calendar in this booklet on pages 4-6 for you to use.

It’s a good idea to ask your healthcare provider for the lab results so that you can keep your own records. This is helpful in the event that your healthcare provider is away and you need to speak with a covering healthcare provider.

If You Miss a Dose or Need More Pills

If you accidentally forget to take a dose, contact your healthcare provider. Do not take an extra tablet to catch up. Also, do not suddenly stop taking Coumadin® unless you discuss this with your healthcare provider. If you need Coumadin® refills, try to use the same brand of Coumadin® or warfarin.

Follow-up Monitoring - Lab Work

For Patients Discharged to Home

Prior to leaving the hospital, our staff will make arrangements for lab tests to be conducted twice a week, usually on Mondays and Thursdays. If possible, we will arrange for the lab to do the blood test in your home. This information will appear on your Coumadin® Discharge Form.

Information we will give you:

- Name of the home care agency that will be drawing your blood
- Telephone and fax number of the lab that will process your blood work

What you need to do:

- Keep records of the information we provide you.
- Be sure you know which healthcare provider is responsible for managing your Coumadin® (including name, phone and fax number). The laboratory will send the blood results directly to your healthcare provider.
- If the name of the lab is unknown at the time of discharge, contact the healthcare provider who will be managing your Coumadin®.
- VERY Important! Blood test results are usually available to your healthcare provider the day after your blood draw. Your healthcare provider will contact you regarding your results and Coumadin® dosing. If your healthcare provider has not called you 24 hours after your blood has been drawn, we suggest you call them regarding the Coumadin® dosing.
- Keep all scheduled appointments for lab work. If for any reason the blood is not drawn at the scheduled time, you must notify both the laboratory and your healthcare provider in order to make alternative arrangements.

Arranging for home blood draws:

Although we will try our best to arrange for the lab technicians to come to your home, sometimes this is not possible. Unfortunately, certain insurance companies do not cover home lab arrangements or a lab may not be available to make visits in your area. Before you leave the hospital, your case manager will discuss this with you and help locate an outside laboratory for blood tests.

- ***Be sure to give your healthcare provider the name, phone and fax numbers of your laboratory.***
- Usually your HSS healthcare provider will manage your Coumadin®. If you live in the tri-state area (NY, NJ, CT) or limited areas outside this region, your HSS healthcare provider will manage your Coumadin®. Otherwise, you may need to be managed by your local healthcare provider.

Be sure not to leave the hospital without your Coumadin® Discharge Form, which includes the name and phone number of the healthcare provider who will manage your Coumadin®.

Follow-up Monitoring - Lab Work

For Patients Transferred to a Rehabilitation Hospital

While you are at the rehabilitation center, the healthcare providers there will monitor your lab work and prescribe your Coumadin®. They are also responsible for writing your prescriptions, and arranging your blood tests when you leave the rehabilitation center.

Prior to leaving the rehabilitation center, be sure to have the "Coumadin® Rehabilitation Discharge Form" completed. It gives important information regarding the following:

1. The name and phone number of the healthcare provider in the rehabilitation center facility who was responsible for your Coumadin® therapy.
2. The INR lab results and Coumadin® doses prescribed during your rehabilitation center stay.
3. The date of the next blood tests and whether you will have to go to a lab or if the lab technician will come to your home, as well as the laboratory name, phone and fax numbers. In most cases after discharge from rehabilitation, you will have to make arrangements to go to an outside lab for your tests.
4. The name of the healthcare provider who will receive the result of your blood tests. This is the person responsible for monitoring your Coumadin® therapy after discharge from the rehabilitation facility. This will normally be the HSS healthcare provider who followed you at HSS unless you make other specific arrangements.
5. The dose of Coumadin® that you should take once you are home, until your next lab test.
6. Please contact your health provider's office indicated on your discharge form once you have returned home in order to coordinate lab testing.

VERY IMPORTANT

- Confirm that the rehab center sent all the information listed above regarding your Coumadin® therapy to the healthcare provider who will be following you after discharge from rehab.
- You should also have a copy of this form before leaving rehab. Be sure to ask for it if you don't receive it.

Warnings and Precautions

Antidote • Alcohol • Medication & Supplement Interactions

Antidote

Vitamin K (also known as Mephyton® and phytonadione) is the antidote to Coumadin®. This medicine reverses the effectiveness of Coumadin®. It helps your blood to clot. Be sure you receive a prescription for vitamin K before leaving the hospital or rehab facility. Fill the prescription and have it ready in case you are instructed to use it. If you have a bleeding emergency, contact your healthcare provider for their advice about taking the vitamin K tablets and go to the nearest emergency room. Do not take vitamin K unless specifically instructed to do so.

Alcohol

Drinking alcohol with Coumadin® can put you at risk for bleeding. Alcohol consumption is strongly discouraged while on this medication.

Medication and Supplement Interactions

There are many medications and supplements that may alter the effectiveness of Coumadin®. These include over-the-counter, herbal, or prescription medicines as well as nutritional supplements such as those found in health food stores. (A list of the herbal medications and nutritional supplements can be found on page 14.) While taking Coumadin®, always talk to your healthcare provider before starting or stopping any medication or supplement.

- Pay close attention to aspirin-containing medications. These include nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs): ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn), and meloxicam (Mobic). Only take aspirin or NSAIDs at the specific instructions of your cardiologist or healthcare provider.
- Tell all your healthcare providers that you are on Coumadin® therapy. This includes dentists, podiatrists, and nurses.



Diet and Vitamin K

If your doctor has prescribed Coumadin or warfarin to “thin” your blood, you need to watch how much vitamin K you get from food and dietary supplements.

Coumadin or warfarin interferes with vitamin K so that your blood clots more slowly. The doctor uses a test called INR to make sure that your blood will not clot too quickly or too slowly. Changing how much vitamin K you get can change your INR. This change could result in bleeding or an unwanted blood clot.

Maintain a Consistent Vitamin K Intake

Keep your intake of high vitamin K foods consistent. You might plan to eat no more than ½ cup of these foods per day.

Do not have large changes in the medium vitamin K foods you eat. For instance, it would not be wise to eat coleslaw at every meal and then stop eating it entirely.

Eating more than the serving size for a moderate or low-vitamin K food can make it a high-vitamin K food. Do not drink more than 4 ounces of cranberry, pomegranate or grapefruit juice per day.

The tables here serve as a guide. Actual values may vary depending on product processing. Vegetables that are frozen and then cooked may have higher vitamin K values.

HIGH VITAMIN K FOODS (MORE THAN 100 MCG)	Food	Serving	mcg
	Broccoli, cooked	1/2 cup	110
	Brussels sprouts, cooked	1/2 cup	150
	Endive, raw	1 cup	116
	Greens, beet, cooked	1/2 cup	287
	Greens, collard, cooked	1/2 cup	350
	Greens, turnip, frozen, cooked	1/2 cup	425
	Kale, raw	1/2 cup	274
	Kale, fresh or frozen, cooked	1/2 cup	550
	Onions, green or scallion	1/2 cup	103
	Parsley, raw	10 sprigs	164
MODERATE VITAMIN K FOODS (25-100 MCG)	Spinach, cooked	1/2 cup	444
	Swiss chard, cooked	1/2 cup	287
	Food	Serving	mcg
	Asparagus, cooked	5 spears	38
	Asparagus, frozen, cooked	1/2 cup	72
	Broccoli, raw	1/2 cup	45
	Cabbage, coleslaw, cooked	1/2 cup	37
	Cabbage, green, cooked	1/2 cup	82
	Dried peas, black-eyed, cooked	1/2 cup	32
	Kiwi fruit	1 medium	31
	Lettuce, green leaf, cooked	1 cup	97
	Lettuce, romaine	1 cup	57
	Noodles, spinach, cooked	1/2 cup	81
	Okra, frozen	1/2 cup	44
	Prunes, dried	5 each	15
	Tuna, light, canned in oil	3 oz.	25
	Watercress, raw	1 cup	37

LOW VITAMIN K FOODS (less than 25 mcg)

Food	Serving	mcg
Artichoke, cooked	1 medium	18
Avocado, raw	1 oz.	6
Beans, green or yellow, cooked	1/2 cup	10
Blackberries or blueberries	1/2 cup	14
Cabbage, raw	1/2 cup	21
Carrots and carrot juice	1/2 cup	11-18
Cauliflower, cooked	1/2 cup	9
Celery, raw	1/2 cup	18
Cucumber, with peel	1/2 cup	9
Dried beans and peas, most types	1/2 cup	5-9
Grapes	1/2 cup	12
Lettuce, iceberg	1 cup	13
Mango	1 medium	9
Margarine-blend, tub or stick	1 tbsp	13-15
Mayonnaise	1 tbsp	6
Nuts, pine, cashews	1 oz.	15
Oil, olive	1 tbsp	8
Oil, soybean, canola, salad type	1 tbsp	10-25
Papaya	1 medium	8
Parsley, dried	1 tbsp	18
Pear	1 medium	8
Peas, green	1/2 cup	19
Pickles, dill or kosher	1 spear	14
Salad dressings	1 tbsp	15
Sauerkraut	1/2 cup	16
Seeds, pumpkin	1 oz.	13
Soy beans	1/2 cup	16
Soy milk	1 cup	7
Tomato, raw	1 medium	10
Tomato sauce: spaghetti, marinara, or paste	1/2 cup	17

VITAMIN K FREE FOODS (less than 5 mcg)

Food	Serving
Bread and cereal products	1 oz. or 1/2 cup
Cheese, all types	1 oz.
Eggs	1 large
Fish and shellfish not listed elsewhere	3 oz.
Meat and poultry, all types	1 oz.
Fruit: whole, canned, or juice, not listed elsewhere	1 each or 1/2 cup
Nuts, not listed elsewhere	1 oz.
Seeds, sunflower	2 tbsp
Vegetables, and vegetable juice not listed elsewhere	1/2 cup
Milk and dairy products, all types	1 cup (8 oz.)

Nutrient Data Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 21: accessed April 9, 2009. Copyright © 2012 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Reprinted with permission. ISMP Institute for Safe Medication Practices ©2013

Warnings and Precautions

Supplements

- Dietary supplements can affect how your blood clots. Use only supplements approved by your physician, registered dietitian, or health care provider.
- Supplements that can usually be taken with Coumadin are calcium, vitamin D, vitamin C and all B vitamins.
- Do not take vitamin E or fish oil supplements.
- Green tea may affect the way your body processes Coumadin, making it difficult to regulate your daily dosage. Speak with your healthcare provider if you drink or consume green tea-containing products.
- Herbal supplements to avoid include the following:
 - alfalfa
 - arnica
 - bilberry
 - butchers broom
 - cat's claw
 - dong quai
 - feverfew
 - forskolin
 - garlic
 - ginger
 - ginkgo
 - horse chestnut
 - inositol hexaphosphate
 - licorice
 - meililot (sweet clover)
 - pau d'arco
 - red clover
 - St John's wort
 - sweet woodruff
 - turmeric
 - willow bark
 - wheat grass
- A multivitamin with no more than 100 micrograms of vitamin K can be taken only if it is taken daily. Do not skip doses. Alternatively, do not take it at all.



Stay Safe While Taking Your Blood Thinner

Safety at Home

If you are in distress, call 911 and go to the nearest emergency room for evaluation.

Let your healthcare provider know immediately if you notice any of the following:

- Bleeding during bowel movements or dark black stools
- Vomiting of blood or brownish material the consistency of coffee grounds
- Red or brown urine
- Excessive bleeding when brushing your teeth
- Nosebleeds that last more than 10 minutes
- Bleeding from cuts that does not stop in 10 minutes
- Extensive bruising for unknown reason
- More bleeding than usual during your menstrual cycle or unexpected vaginal bleeding
- Feeling faint or dizzy

Tell your healthcare provider if you are or become pregnant. This is very important because Coumadin® should not be taken during pregnancy. It can result in birth defects.

If surgery or dental work is scheduled, be sure to tell your surgeon or dentist in advance that you are on Coumadin®. Minor dental procedures, such as cleanings and fillings, often do not warrant stopping Coumadin®, so speak with your dentist when scheduling your appointment. If stopping therapy is necessary, tell your healthcare provider who is managing your Coumadin® at least one week in advance so that arrangements can be made to stop the Coumadin® and, if necessary, arrange for a substitute blood thinner.

Medical Alert Bracelet

If you are on Coumadin® long term, you may wish to wear a medical alert bracelet. Ask your pharmacist where you can purchase one.

Stay Safe While Taking Your Blood Thinner

Do I Need a Medical Alert Bracelet?

When you are on Coumadin®, call your healthcare provider and go to the hospital immediately if you have had a bad fall or a hard bump, even if you are not bleeding. You can be bleeding but not see any blood. For example, if you fall and hit your head, bleeding can occur inside your skull. Or, if you hurt your arm during a fall and then notice a large purple bruise, this means you are bleeding under your skin. Because you are taking a blood thinner, you need to be careful when you use knives, scissors, razors, or any sharp object that can make you bleed.

You should avoid activities and sports that could cause injury. Swimming and walking are safe activities. If you would like to start a new activity, talk to your healthcare provider. You can still do many things that you enjoy. If you like to work in the yard, just be sure to wear sturdy shoes and gloves to protect yourself. Or, if you like to ride your bike, be sure to wear a helmet.

TO PREVENT INJURY INDOORS

- Be very careful using knives and scissors.
- Use an electric razor.
- Use a soft toothbrush.
- Use waxed dental floss.
- Do not use toothpicks.
- Wear shoes or non-skid slippers in the house.
- Be careful when you trim your toenails.
- Do not trim corns or calluses yourself.

TO PREVENT INJURY OUTDOORS

- Always wear shoes.
- Wear gloves when using sharp tools.
- Avoid risky activities and sports.
- Wear gardening gloves when doing yard work.

Information adapted from August 2010 AHRQ information booklet

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS TO REMEMBER:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take your Coumadin® the same time every evening. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep your intake of foods containing vitamin K consistent. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep all scheduled lab test appointments. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Call your healthcare provider if you have any questions, problems, concerns, or symptoms related to the use of Coumadin® therapy. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep a record of your lab test results and Coumadin® doses. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do not take any new medicine without your healthcare provider's permission — particularly aspirin, or any medicines which may thin your blood. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep a list of all your medications and carry it with you all times. |

Check Your Knowledge: Post Test

1. The reason for your anticoagulation therapy is:
 - a. To prevent blood clots.
 - b. It was prescribed by your healthcare provider.
 - c. Because you had orthopedic surgery.
 - d. All of the above.
2. Signs of excess bleeding include:
 - a. A cut, bleeding gums, or nosebleed that does not stop bleeding within 10 minutes.
 - b. Bright red blood in or tarry appearance of bowel movements.
 - c. Red, dark, or coffee colored urine.
 - d. All of the above.
3. If you have excess bleeding, you should:
 - a. Apply pressure to the bleeding site.
 - b. Call your healthcare provider.
 - c. Not panic.
 - d. All of the above.
4. The safe amount of vitamin K that can be consumed while taking Coumadin®:
 - a. Is none.
 - b. Is a consistent amount.
 - c. Does not matter because vitamin K and Coumadin® have no relationship.
5. If you miss a dose of your anticoagulation medication, you should:
 - a. Take two doses the next day.
 - b. Skip it; it's not important to take it as directed.
 - c. Call your healthcare provider.
6. You should keep a daily record of your Coumadin® doses and lab results.
 - a. True
 - b. False
7. You need to contact your health care provider before beginning any new medication while taking Coumadin®.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Answers: 1.d 2.d 3.d 4.b 5.c 6.a 7.a

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