



ANTICOAGULATION CLINIC ANTICOAGULANT COUNSELLING PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

WHY AM I TAKING WARFARIN?

Warfarin is an anticoagulant or blood thinner. It is used to prevent abnormal clotting and is prescribed by your doctor to prevent harmful blood clots from forming or moving.

The success of your treatment depends on the correct dose of anticoagulant, which varies from person to person. The dose is determined by the doctor based on the result of blood tests.

HOW DO I RECOGNISE MY TABLETS?

Remember the name and the strength of the anticoagulant so that you take the correct dose prescribed. The name of your medicine is WARFARIN and the brand name is MAREVAN®. Learn to identify the strength of the tablet by its colour:

1mg: brown
3mg: blue
5mg: pink

It is important not to change the brand of warfarin on your own as this can affect the control of warfarin therapy.

WHAT IF I MISS A DOSE?

Take your tablet(s) at the same time each day. NEVER miss a dose; if you do, 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 the dose. Do not take a double dose to catch up but take your usual dose the next day. Remember to tell the doctor about the missed dose when you next go for your blood test. However, if more than one dose is missed, contact the doctor as soon as you can for advice. Never make dose adjustments without first consulting your doctor.

If necessary, use a calendar and mark off each dose by an oblique line across the date. In this way, you will be unlikely to miss a dose. Always make sure that you have at least a week's supply of tablets in hand so that you will not run short.

WHAT IF I BLEED OR FALL ILL?

In the event of illness (vomiting, diarrhoea, infection or fever), you may be required to come back for a blood check. If you experience prolonged bleeding or severe bruising, consult the doctor immediately. Always inform your doctor or dentist that you are taking warfarin before any treatment, especially before any operation or dental procedure.

WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR WHEN TAKING WARFARIN?

When you are taking warfarin, you may tend to bleed or bruise more easily when injured. It is very important for you to recognise some signs of bleeding, both obvious and 'hidden' (bleeding inside the body). **Contact your doctor promptly if you experience any gum bleeding, easy bruising for no reason, nose bleeds, heavy menstrual flow, dark urine, blood in urine or dark tarry stools.**

A blood clot may still form while you are on warfarin therapy before your dose is optimised. Contact your doctor if you experience swelling, warmth, redness, pain, numbness in your legs, blackouts, dizziness, chest pain, unexplained loss of feeling, slurred speech, breathlessness, visual disturbances.

WHAT IF I TAKE OTHER MEDICINES AT THE SAME TIME?

Other medicines may change the way warfarin works. Your doctor must be informed if you are taking any other medicines including those you buy from shops for cold, headache, gastric discomfort, constipation or any other medical conditions. This is because warfarin may interact with drugs such as antacids, aspirin and cimetidine. Avoid vitamin supplements containing Vitamin K. Always consult your doctor or pharmacist before starting or stopping any other medicines. Avoid all forms of health foods (eg ginko biloba, omega fish oils, garlic, ginger supplements); alternative or traditional medicines (eg ginseng, Dang Gui, Dangshen, cordyceps).

DO I NEED TO CHANGE MY DIET?

When you are on warfarin, it is important for you to be consistent in your dietary intake of Vitamin K. This is because vitamin K promotes blood clotting and any variation of Vitamin K intake in your diet may affect the way warfarin works. Vitamin K is commonly found in food like green leafy vegetables, broccoli, beetroot, spinach and liver. However, it is not necessary to avoid food rich in Vitamin K as some of them contribute to a healthy diet. Maintain your diet and avoid drastic changes.

Moderate amounts of alcohol may be taken, not exceeding 2 cans of beer or 1 glass of wine per day.

WHY DO I NEED BLOOD TESTS?

It is important to keep appointments for your blood tests and subsequent check-ups. The dosage of warfarin is individualised and adjusted according to the results of blood tests. These blood tests (called International Normalised Ratio or INR) will measure how your blood clotting factors are working and will help your doctor to adjust the right dose for you.

HOW SHOULD I STORE MY MEDICINES?

Store your medicine in a cool, dark and dry place. Do not keep them in the bathroom, kitchen or refrigerator. Remember to keep them out of reach of children.

ANY OTHER PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE NOTE OF?

Inform your doctor if you are pregnant or intend to get pregnant.

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Information is correct at time of printing and subject to revision without prior notice.