

Taking an Anticoagulant

DEPARTMENT OF TRAUMA HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Coumadin is an anticoagulant, sometimes called a blood thinner. It does not really "thin" the blood, but it does cause it to clot more slowly. This helps prevent harmful clots from forming in your arteries and veins. Other names for coumadin are warfarin, Phenprocoumon and Anisindione. Your doctor has ordered a dose that keeps a balance between clotting and unnecessary bleeding. It is very important to follow all instructions exactly.

How to take coumadin

Take the exact dose prescribed. Take it the same time every day. Do not skip a dose. If you miss taking a dose, try to take it within 8 hours of the regularly scheduled time. Do not double a dose. If you miss several doses in a row, call your doctor for instructions. Know your dose in milligrams. Any doctors or dentists you see will need to know exactly how much coumadin you take. Do not take any other medicine unless your doctor prescribes it. This includes medicines you can get without a prescription. Medicines such as aspirin, ibuprofen, cold remedies, antacids and vitamin supplements can interfere with Coumadin.

Precautions

- Have your blood tested as often as the doctor advises. This is how your doctor checks the balance between bleeding and clotting. Your doctor may change the dose according to the results of your blood test.
- Ask your doctor about drinking beer, wine or other alcohol. Generally you should not have more than one or two drinks at a time.
- Wear a Medic-alert bracelet. Avoid activities that can cause cuts or bruises. It's a good idea to use an electric razor and a non-slip mat in the bathtub.
- Talk to your doctor if you are thinking about becoming pregnant. Coumadin can affect the development of an unborn baby and cause bleeding.

Your diet

Eat a normal, balanced diet. Also, because certain green, leafy vegetables can affect your blood's ability to clot, eat about the same amount each day. These vegetables include asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, lettuce, turnip greens, spinach and watercress. Other foods that can affect clotting include fish, pork or beef liver and tomatoes.

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Call your doctor immediately if you have...

- nosebleeds
- feelings of being dizzy or faint
- weakness that you cannot explain
- red or brown urine fever and skin rash
- red or black tarry bowel movements
- headaches or pain in the abdomen
- blood in your spit
- bruises that do not heal but get larger
- more than your usual menstrual flow

TRAUMA PATIENT CARE CENTER

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