

Taking Warfarin: Your Daily Safety Guide

Medical-Surgical · Cardiovascular

Warfarin is a blood thinner that helps prevent harmful clots. It also makes bleeding harder to stop.

Take the right dose

- Take warfarin at the same time each day. Follow your dose calendar.
- If you forget, take it when you remember that same day.
- If you remember the next day, skip the missed dose and call your clinic.
- **Never double a dose.**

Keep your blood tests

- Your INR blood test checks how long your blood takes to clot.
- Your target range: _____. Next test: _____.
- Most targets are 2.0 to 3.0. Some heart valves need 2.5 to 3.5.

Keep food choices steady

- Eat similar amounts of leafy greens from week to week. Do not cut them out.
- Avoid large amounts of cranberry juice or cranberry products.
- Tell your clinic about major diet changes, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Ask before adding medicines

- Check all new medicines, including antibiotics, with your pharmacist.

- Do not add aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen unless approved.
- Check before using garlic pills, ginkgo, or St. John's wort.

Prevent bleeding and injury

- Use a soft toothbrush and electric razor. Avoid contact sports.
- Tell every provider and dentist. Wear a medical alert ID.
- **Get emergency care after any head injury, even if you feel well.**

Call your provider today if you have

- New bruising, repeated small nosebleeds, or bleeding gums
- Red urine or heavier periods: call promptly
- A missed or extra dose, or possible pregnancy

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- Heavy bleeding or bleeding that will not stop
- Vomiting blood, or black, sticky stool with dizziness or weakness
- Sudden severe headache, weakness, trouble speaking, confusion, or fainting

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: nclexpace.com/patient-education/warfarin-safety/patient

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