

# ANTICOAGULATION SERVICE

## SANTA CLARA KAISER

### INFORMATION FOR THE PATIENT

#### INTRODUCTION

The information contained in this booklet is to help you understand and achieve the optimal benefit from your Warfarin. Warfarin therapy is a collaborative effort between you, your physician and the Anticoagulation Service (ACS). You play a critical role in ensuring that your therapy is successful.

The Anticoagulation Service is committed to providing you with professional pharmaceutical care and excellent service. Please feel free to call us with any questions or concerns.

#### RISKS

Some risk is involved in taking this medication because of its effect on clotting. However, the risk is relatively small when it is taken properly with appropriate monitoring and adjustment. Cooperation is required between the patient, the physician and the anticoagulation team to achieve the desired results.

#### WHAT IS WARFARIN?

- Warfarin is an anti-coagulant
- "Anti" means "against"
- "Coagulant" means "blood clotting"

#### WHY DO I NEED WARFARIN?

- Decreases the risk of blood clots from forming or getting larger. It does not dissolve blood clots directly.
- Used to decrease the risk of blood clots from being formed by diseased or artificial heart valves or by irregular heart beats
- Treats existing blood clots in the blood vessels (often in the leg, the lungs, the heart, or the brain) and decreases the risk of any future blood clots.

#### WHY DO I NEED BLOOD TESTS?



- Blood tests determine the effect of warfarin on your blood
- Many things can interfere with or enhance the effects of warfarin
- Your test is called a protime. The result is called an INR.
- Our goal is to keep you within a specified range
- Your lab results will determine whether or not you need to take more or less warfarin
- You do not need to fast before blood tests

#### HOW OFTEN DO I TAKE BLOOD TESTS (PROTIME)?

- Lab tests will be done periodically and could be daily, weekly, or monthly depending on

your results

- Please do your lab test as early in the day as possible

### **WHAT CAN CHANGE MY BLOOD TEST (PROTIME) RESULTS?**

- Sickness
  - Infection, flu, diarrhea, vomiting, fever, retaining fluid, decreased appetite
- Drastic changes in diet
  - Types of food, amounts of food, fad diets, food supplements, weight loss diets
- Changes in activity level
- Avoid contact sports
- Changes in medications
  - Prescription (even if taken for only a short time), non-prescription, vitamins, minerals, herbal supplements, dietary weight loss supplements
  - No aspirin containing products or NSAIDS (eg. Motrin (ibuprofen), Naprosyn, Alleve, Advil)
- Alcohol consumption
- Changes in your health condition




\*\* Call the Anticoagulation Clinic as soon as possible if any of the above change

### **WHY DO I NEED TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE FOODS I EAT?**

- Vitamin K plays a role in the formation of blood clots; a high intake of this vitamin can decrease the effectiveness of warfarin
- Your dose of warfarin is prescribed to accommodate your normal intake of Vitamin K. Make no major changes in your diet
- Please try to keep your diet as consistent as possible in your vegetable intake. If these foods are eaten only occasionally, this may lead to changes in your blood test resulting in more frequent lab tests. The chart below will help you.

#### **Vitamin K Content**

<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>
Asparagus, 7 spears	Broccoli, ½ cup
Avocado, 1 small	Brussels sprouts, 5
Beans, pod, 1 cup	Cabbage, 2/3 cup
Peas, 2/3 cup	Chard, Swiss n/a
Pickle, dill, 1 medium	Collard greens, ½ cup
Sauerkraut, 1 cup	Cucumber peel, 1 cup
Soy bean, ½ cup	Endive, 2 cups
Squash, summer, peel only, n/a	Kale, n/a
	Lettuce: Bib, Heading, Red Leaf, n/a
	Mayonnaise, 7 T
	Mustard greens, 1-1/2 cup
	Oil: Canola, Salad, Soybean, 7 T
	Onion, green, 2/3 cup
	Spinach, ½ cup
	Turnip greens, 1 –1/2 cups
	Watercress. 3 cups

n/a = not available

Source: Health Notes, volume 1, number 3, page 20, 1999

## **HOW DO I TAKE WARFARIN?**

- Make sure it is the right tablet color, shape, and strength
- Use the same manufacturer consistently
- Take the tablet at the same time everyday, preferably in the evening
- Take with or without food
- Take exactly as you were instructed
- Write your dosing instructions in the warfarin calendar provided
- Your dosage is dependent upon your blood test results
- Do not “catch up” if you miss a dose
- Notify ACS and your physician immediately if you become or intend to become pregnant

## **IMPORTANT REMINDERS**



- Inform all medical and dental personnel that you are taking warfarin
- Carry a medical alert card or wear a medical alert bracelet indicating you are on warfarin
- Use a soft bristle toothbrush and waxed dental floss
- Avoid placing yourself at risk for injury
- Call in prescription refills at least 1 week before running out
- Look for signs and symptoms of bleeding
  - Nose/gum bleed, pink/brown urine, black/blood stool, unusual bleeding, large or multiple unexplained bruises, unusually prolonged headache, severe stomach/back pain, unusually heavy/unexpected menstrual bleeding, vomiting blood or coffee ground material.

## **WHAT TO DO IF BLEEDING OCCURS:**



A serious fall or head injury	Go to the emergency room (ER) for evaluation
Large or multiple unexplained bruises on your skin	Contact the Anticoagulation Clinic. If severe, go to the Urgent Care Clinic or ER
Continuous bleeding that does not stop (from cut or nosebleed)	Press and hold the site for 20 minutes, if it does not stop then go to the ER
More gum bleeding than usual	Contact the Anticoagulation Clinic Use a soft bristle toothbrush
Heavier bleeding during menses	Contact the Anticoagulation Clinic, and call your physician

**WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF YOU HAVE:**



Two consecutive episodes of black and tarry or bright red blood in stool	Go to the ER immediately
Two consecutive episodes of red, pink, or brown urine	Go to the ER immediately
Infection, flu, diarrhea, vomiting, fever, retaining fluid, or decreased appetite for longer than 48 hours	Contact the Anticoagulation Clinic. If severe, go to the ER
Coughing or vomiting blood	Go to the ER immediately
Unusually prolonged or sudden severe headache	Call and/or go to the ER
Sudden unexplained pain (ie. Abdominal,back) or worsening pain	Call and/or go to the ER
Trouble breathing, chest pain, or if you feel new or increasing severe dizziness or weakness	Go to the ER

\*\* For all of the above, contact the Anticoagulation Clinic as soon as possible

**WHEN TO CALL THE ANTICOAGULATION CLINIC:**



- When starting a new medication (prescription or non prescription), herbal supplement, vitamins, minerals, dietary weight loss supplements, nutrition supplements
- Any changes in current medications
- Any change or worsening of your condition
- Any visit to the ER or admission to the hospital
- If you have not received a call within 48 hours after your protime test
- Before going away on vacation
- If your telephone number changes, you are planning to move, or if your health plan insurance changes