

Coumadin (Warfarin)

Blood thinner medicine

Coumadin is also called warfarin. This type of medicine is known as an anticoagulant or blood thinner. Coumadin helps stop clots from forming in the blood. A blood clot could cause serious problems if it moved to a different part of the body, such as the heart, lungs or brain.

Your blood tests while taking Coumadin

Your doctor will use a blood test to adjust your Coumadin dose. The blood test is called an INR (International Normalized Ratio). It measures how long it takes your blood to clot. **Your Coumadin dose may need to be changed to keep the best INR range for your condition.**

Be sure to keep your blood test and doctor appointments while taking Coumadin. If you will not be able to get to the appointment as scheduled, call right away to make another appointment.

Take Coumadin as ordered

- Coumadin comes in tablets to be taken by mouth.
- Your doctor will tell you how much medicine to take. This is your **dose**.
- Your dose may change based on your blood test.
- Take Coumadin **one time** each day, at the **same time** each day.
- If you forget a dose, **do not** take two doses the next day. Call your doctor if you miss two or more doses.
- **Never stop taking your Coumadin unless told to do so by your doctor.**
- Keep a supply of medicine, so you do not run out. Plan ahead for weekends, holidays and vacations.
- Do not share this medicine with anyone.
- Tell all of your health care providers you are taking Coumadin. This includes your doctors, dentists, nurses, pharmacists and emergency workers.
- Eat your normal diet while taking Coumadin. Do not change the amount of green, leafy vegetables you eat in your diet.
- Check with your doctor before drinking alcohol, such as beer, wine and liquor.

Call your doctor if you have:

- Unusual bleeding:
 - Coughing up or vomiting red or brown material that looks like coffee grounds
 - Nose bleeds or extra bleeding from the gums around your teeth
 - Red or black tarry stools
 - Red or dark urine
 - Bruises that appear without injury
 - Bleeding from cuts that does not stop with pressure
 - Very heavy vaginal bleeding or menstrual flow
- Pain, swelling or discomfort
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea that lasts more than 24 hours
- Tiredness, fever, chills, sore throat, itching rash or mouth sores
- Any new signs after starting this medicine

Call 911 or have someone take you to an emergency room if you have:

- Severe headache
- Weakness, slurred speech or visual changes

Precautions

- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking any new medicines. This includes prescription medicines, over the counter medicines, herbals, food supplements and home remedies. These can make Coumadin not work as it should.
- Coumadin should not be taken during pregnancy. If you think that you are pregnant or may become pregnant, tell your doctor right away.
- Avoid sports or other activities that may cause injury like bruising, cuts or serious injury. Report any falls or blows to the head to your doctor right away.
- **Have your blood tests done as ordered**, so you can work with your doctor to be sure you are taking the right amount of medicine.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions or concerns.