

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET



MEDICINE TO TREAT: HEART DISEASES

Warfarin

This medicine has been proven to be safe and effective, but it can cause serious injury if a mistake happens while taking it. This means that it is very important for you to know about this medicine and take it exactly as directed.

1. What is the medicine used for?

Warfarin is an anticoagulant, and is also known as a blood thinner. It is used to prevent abnormal blood clots from forming and existing clots from getting bigger. This allows the body to dissolve the clots naturally.

You should find out from your doctor or pharmacist why you need this medicine and how long you would need to take warfarin for.

2. How should I take the medicine?

- Do not stop taking your medicines without checking with your doctors.
- Follow the instructions on the prescription label. Take your warfarin at the same time each day.
- Always take the medicine in the same way you are used to, either before or after meals.
- If you do miss a dose, take it as soon as you can, if it is within 8 hours of your usual time to take warfarin.
- If it is after 8 hours, do not take that dose. Just continue to take your warfarin at the usual time the next day. Do not take double doses to make up for the missed dose.
- Do record all missed doses and let your doctor know at your next appointment.

3. What are the possible side effects of the medicine?

Warfarin may cause you to either bleed or bruise more easily. Contact your doctor as soon as you can if you notice any of these symptoms:

- blood in your urine, cloudy or dark urine
- black, sticky or gluey faeces
- heavy menstrual bleeding
- unusual bruising or bleeding from gums or nose or when you cough
- red spots on the skin

4. How do I know if I am allergic to this medicine?

The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following:

- Swollen face/eyes/lips
- Difficulty in breathing
- Itchy skin rashes over your whole body

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should stop your medicine immediately and see your doctor.

5. What precautions should I follow when taking the medicine?

- Visit your doctor for regular check-ups. At the beginning, your doctor may order blood tests more often to try to find the right dosage for you.
- While you are taking warfarin, carry an identification card or book with your name, dose and name of medicines being used. You should also include the name and phone number of your doctor or person to contact in an emergency. If you are taking warfarin for a longer time, you should apply for a Medik Awas card. This will help any healthcare professional know that you are on warfarin, especially in case of an emergency.
- If you are going for surgery, including dental treatment, please inform your doctor or dentist as these medicines may need to be stopped temporarily before the procedure to prevent too much bleeding.
- There are different brands of warfarin available in the market (e.g. Marevan®, Coumadin®). Do not change brands on your own because they may have slightly different effectiveness.
- If you are pregnant or planning to get pregnant or breastfeeding, you should inform your doctor.
- See your doctor immediately if you experience any of the following signs
 - Difficulty breathing, fast heart rate, chest pain
 - Sudden leg pain with swelling and redness
 - Sudden changes in your vision or weakness in one side of your body
 - Slurred speech

6. What food or medicines should I avoid?

- Do not start or stop taking any medicines without first checking with your doctor or pharmacist as certain medicines (e.g. Aspirin, certain antibiotics and painkillers) may affect warfarin.
- When you are on warfarin, it is important to eat a normal balanced diet and make sure the amount of Vitamin K you take in is about the same everyday. This is because Vitamin K, which can be found in many green leafy vegetables (e.g. spinach) as well as broccoli, cauliflower and brussel sprouts, can affect warfarin. Therefore, you should try to take similar amounts of such vegetables everyday. However, it is not necessary to avoid food high in Vitamin K as some of them contribute to a healthy diet.

Hence, you should avoid making big changes to your diet without first checking with your doctor or pharmacist.

- Do not drink too much alcohol. You should not take more than 5 cans of beer or 1 bottle of wine per week
- Do not take any health supplements (e.g. omega fish oil, garlic, ginkgo) or traditional and herbal products (e.g. Ginseng, Dang Gui, Dangshen, cordyceps) as they may affect warfarin. If you want to start on supplements and herbs, do check with your doctor or pharmacist.

7. Do I need to make any major lifestyle changes?

You do not need to make any major lifestyle changes. However, be extra careful when you handle razors or other sharp objects. Try not to do contact sports or other activities, which may cause you to be injured. You should also try not to do activities that might cause you to fall, such as climbing ladders. When you have a cut, you will need to apply pressure for a longer period to stop the bleeding. If the bleeding does not stop after 5 to 10 minutes, please contact your doctor.

8. How should I store the medicine?

- Keep your medicines in the original container or packaging, tightly closed or sealed in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight.
- Keep the medicine out of reach of children.
- Throw away all expired medicines.

This leaflet answers some common questions about this medicine. It does not contain all the available information. It also does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.