

COUMADIN EDUCATION

Taking Coumadin

Follow These Tips:

- Take Coumadin at the same time each day. If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember – unless it's almost time for your next dose. If so, skip the missed dose. Do not take a double dose.
- Go for your blood (protime / INR) tests as often as directed.
- Don't take any other medications without checking with your healthcare provider first. This includes aspirin, vitamins, and herbal supplements.
- Tell all healthcare providers that you take Coumadin. It's also a good idea to carry a medical ID card or wear a medical-alert bracelet.
- Use a soft toothbrush and an electric razor.
- Don't go barefoot. And don't trim corns or calluses yourself.

When To Call Your Healthcare Provider:

Call your healthcare provider before you take your Coumadin if you have any of these problems:

- Bleeding that doesn't stop in 10 minutes
- A heavier than normal period or bleeding between periods
- Coughing or throwing up blood
- Diarrhea or bleeding hemorrhoids
- Dark urine or black stools
- Red or black-and-blue marks on the skin that become larger
- A fever or an illness that gets worse
- Dizziness or fatigue
- Chest pain or trouble breathing
- A serious fall or a blow to the head
- Swollen lips, tongue, throat, or face
- Hives or painful rash
- Blood in your urine
- Bleeding gums or sores in your mouth
- Urinating less than usual
- Yellowing of the skin or eyes (jaundice)
- Severe headache
- Easy bleeding or bruising
- Purple discoloration of your toes or fingers
- Sudden leg or foot pain

Frequently Asked Questions

What drugs interact with Coumadin?

Drug interactions are common between coumadin and many drugs. Please discuss and prescription and over-the-counter meds with your provider. Herbal medications may also interact with Coumadin. Inform your healthcare provider if you intend to take herbal and/or natural products since you may need to be monitored closely.

Can I drink alcohol with taking Coumadin?

According to the prescribing information for Coumadin, you should avoid drinking alcohol while taking Coumadin since alcohol can change the way your body responds to the medicine. You should speak to your healthcare provider about the effect of alcohol on your Coumadin level.

What should I know about the vitamin K content of foods and Coumadin therapy?

The amount of vitamin K in your diet can change the way Coumadin works for you. If you eat a lot of foods that are high in vitamin K, you can decrease the effect of Coumadin. On the other hand, lowering your vitamin K intake can increase the effect of Coumadin. You should try to eat a normal balanced diet keeping the amount of vitamin K the same everyday. It is important that you check with your healthcare provider before making any major changes to your diet.

In general, leafy green vegetables and certain legumes and vegetable oils contain high amounts of vitamin K. Some foods that are low in vitamin K include roots, bulbs, tubers, the fleshy part of fruits, fruit juices, and other beverages. Cereal grains and other milled products are also low in Vitamin K.

What should I do if I accidentally miss taking my daily dose of Coumadin?

The Coumadin prescribing information states, "If the patient forgets to take the prescribed dose of Coumadin at the scheduled time, the dose should be taken as soon as possible on the same day. The patient should not take the missed dose by doubling the daily dose to make up for missed doses.

What should I do if I am planning on having surgery?

Tell your doctor. Your doctor should then discuss your condition with your surgeon. It is very important to confirm that your doctor and surgeon have communicated regarding your Coumadin therapy and upcoming surgery. This includes dental surgery. Anticoagulants such as Coumadin can increase bleeding during surgery. Depending on your condition and what kind of surgery you are having, your doctor and surgeon will decide if anything needs to change in your Coumadin therapy.