

Precautions related to daily activities

- Tell your doctor or dentist that you are taking warfarin before you undergo any procedure or surgery.
- Avoid activities that could easily lead to injury. If you have a fall or bump your head, closely monitor for signs of internal bleeding (e.g. sudden severe headache, unusual bruising, or blood in urine or stools) and consult your doctor immediately if necessary.
- Reduce the risk of bleeding in daily activities by using products less likely to cause bleeding, such as using a soft bristle toothbrush or shaving with an electric razor rather than a blade.
- Avoid alcohol (including beer, red wine, white wine and spirits).

Precautions related to diet

Vitamin K plays an important role in blood clotting. Avoid sudden changes in the consumption of food rich in vitamin K as any change in vitamin K intake can affect the effect of warfarin.

Certain food should be avoided as they can affect the blood clotting action or directly interfere with warfarin.

For more information on dietary advice, please refer to the 'Warfarin Dietary Guidelines' prepared by the Coordinating Committee – Grade (Dietetics) which is available from this link



Please consult your healthcare professional for further advice if required.

What are the possible side effects ?

The most common side effect associated with the use of warfarin is bleeding. Patients should monitor for signs or symptoms of bleeding:

- Unusual bruising
- Prolonged nosebleed (for more than 10 minutes)
- Blood in urine or have red / dark brown urine
- Vomiting blood or matter that looks like coffee grounds
- Coughing up blood
- Abdominal pain or swelling
- Excessive bleeding from gums when brushing the teeth
- Blood in stools or passing black stools
- Heavy or increased menstrual bleeding or unusual vaginal bleeding between periods
- Prolonged bleeding from cuts or wounds that does not stop (persistent bleeding after pressing with clean gauze for more than 10 minutes)

If bleeding persists or becomes severe, you should seek immediate medical attention.

What if I miss a dose ?

- If you remember on the same day, take the missed dose as soon as possible.
- If you remember on the next day, skip the missed dose and only take the scheduled dose of that day.
- Do not double the dose. Record all the doses you have missed and notify your doctor or pharmacist in the next follow-up consultation.

How to store ?

- Keep out of reach of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place and away from direct heat and light.

Warfarin Oral Anticoagulant



藥劑職系及服務統籌委員會
COC-Grade (Pharmaceutical Services)



醫院管理局
HOSPITAL
AUTHORITY

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What is Warfarin ?



Warfarin is an oral anticoagulant (commonly called a 'blood thinner'). It prevents harmful blood clots from forming inside the blood vessels by increasing the time it takes for the blood to clot.

Indication

Warfarin is prescribed to patients who have had conditions caused by the formation of blood clots such as clots in the legs (deep vein thrombosis) or clots in the lung (pulmonary embolism). It may also be prescribed to patients with conditions that increase the risk of developing harmful clots such as irregular heartbeat (atrial fibrillation), rheumatic heart disease, prior stroke or after implantation of prosthetic heart valves.

How does it work ?



Warfarin blocks the formation of vitamin K-dependent clotting factors in the liver, resulting in a longer time for the blood to clot.

How to use ?



Warfarin is taken once a day. You should take the drug at the same time every day, with or without food.

Take your warfarin exactly as directed. Do not change the dose or stop taking it unless instructed to do so by your healthcare professionals. You may be required to take more than one strength of warfarin tablets depending on the drug dose.

1 mg – brown 3 mg – light blue



If you have been prescribed an alternating dose of warfarin to be taken on EVEN and ODD days, take the EVEN day doses on even-numbered days of the month (e.g. 2nd, 4th, 6th, etc.) and the ODD day doses on odd-numbered days of the month (e.g. 3rd, 5th, 7th... 31st, 1st, etc.). This means two ODD days in a row would occur whenever a month ends on an odd-numbered day.



Hospital Authority (HA) pharmacy departments have standardised the dispensing combination of warfarin tablets against each prescribed dose using only 1mg (brown) and 3mg (light blue) warfarin tablets.

If you receive a different combination from before and have not been informed of a dose change, ask your healthcare professionals for clarification.

Precautions related to drug administration

- ♥ While you are taking warfarin, you will need regular blood tests to check how quickly your blood clots. The extent to which warfarin is working is measured by the International Normalised Ratio (INR).
- ♥ Your doctor or pharmacist will adjust the dose of warfarin until your INR is within a target range. In general, if your INR is below the target range, there is an increased risk of clot formation which can increase the risk of stroke, deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE). **If you develop any of the symptoms listed below, seek medical help immediately.**
 - Symptoms of stroke: sudden severe headache with no known cause, blurred vision, difficulty in speaking or slurred speech, dizziness, sudden and transient numbness, weakness, or paralysis of one arm, one leg or half of the face
 - Symptoms of DVT / PE: Pain or swelling of arms or legs, chest pain, or breathing difficulties.
- ♥ If your INR is above the target range, there is an increased risk of bleeding. **You should monitor for the related signs and symptoms and seek immediate medical care should they occur.**
 - Signs of bleeding: Please refer to the section on "What are the possible side effects".
- ♥ If you have history of drug allergy, consult your doctor or pharmacist before using the medication.
- ♥ If, after taking this medication, you notice any allergic reactions like skin itchiness, face or hand swelling, breathing difficulty, etc., consult your healthcare professionals immediately.
- ♥ Read the information on the drug label each time when you collect the medication, especially the dose and frequency. If you have any questions, consult your doctor or pharmacist immediately.
- ♥ Discard all medications that have expired or are no longer required.
- ♥ Do not take any other medications, including over-the-counter medications, without consulting your doctor or pharmacist. Many drugs can interact with warfarin, such as aspirin and some painkillers.
- ♥ Some vitamins, supplements, nutritional or health products (such as probiotics, green tea extract, glucosamine, and fish oil) can interact with warfarin. Consult your healthcare professionals before taking any of these products.
- ♥ Do not take any Traditional Chinese Medicines (TCM), Proprietary Chinese Medicines, herbal drinks, or food that contains TCM, such as Guilinggao. Many TCM such as ginseng, Dong quai, Danshen, Chishao can interact with warfarin.
- ♥ Do not share your medication with other people.
- ♥ Tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.