

## WARFARIN

1. How many green vegetables should I eat while on warfarin?
  - Vitamin K is found in many foods, especially green, leafy vegetables (such as spinach, broccoli and brussel sprouts) and liver meats
  - Vitamin K lowers the INR, whereas warfarin increases INR
  - You can decide the amount of green vegetables you would like to eat on a weekly basis and try to stay as **consistent** as possible
  - Our clinic will work with you to find a warfarin dose that can balance the vitamin K in your diet and help keep the INR stable
  
2. What are INR levels and how often should I have them done?
  - INR stands for International Normalized Ratio and it is a standardized number that measures the amount of time it takes for your blood to clot
  - The “best” testing frequency is the one your provider provides specifically to you, it is optimized to ensure your INR stays in the targeted range
  - Patients should expect INR monitoring approximately once a month, but you may need more frequent testing when you first start warfarin, when changes are made to your dose or your other medications, or if your INR results are not within therapeutic range
  
3. Will taking a new medication or supplement affect my INR?
  - While taking warfarin it is important to let all of your healthcare providers know all prescriptions and over-the-counter medications you take, including pain relievers, antibiotics, cold medicine, vitamins, and herbal supplements
  
4. What does “bridging” mean with warfarin?
  - Bridging is a term that refers to stopping your warfarin (typically for a procedure) and using a different medication to protect you until you are able to resume warfarin
  - Your provider will give you specific stop and start dates for the warfarin and medications used to bridge

## DOACS

5. What are direct oral anticoagulants?
  - Direct oral anticoagulants (DOACs), include Dabigatran, Apixaban, Rivaroxaban, or Edoxaban
  - DOACs still have the same risk for bleeding as warfarin, and they still require patients to get a blood draw to monitor labs, just not as frequently as warfarin
  
6. What monitoring is done if I am placed on a direct oral anticoagulant?
  - DOAC monitoring includes blood tests to monitor kidney function, liver function and bleeding at least once a year, testing may be more frequent when beginning therapy

7. What do I need to do for my dentist appointment?
  - There is no need to stop your anticoagulant for routine dental care: cleanings, fillings, caps, crowns, even root canals
  - If you are scheduled for extractions or oral surgery, your anticoagulant may need to be stopped ahead of time
  - Always be sure to call your anticoagulation provider at least **1 week** in advance to confirm instructions and always make sure your dentist knows that you take warfarin
  
8. I have a trip planned, what do I need to do about my medications and monitoring?
  - Prepare for travel ahead of time by making sure you have the amount needed of all your medications for the entire duration of your trip, ask your pharmacist if you are needing extra medications to cover your entire trip
  - Alert your anticoagulation clinic if you will need to miss any appointments or try to schedule your appointments before you leave if you have upcoming labs that need to be done
  
9. What over the counter medications can I take for headaches and mild pain while on anticoagulants?
  - Tylenol is okay and the preferred agent, but always check with your provider first
  - Avoid use of NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) such as ibuprofen, naproxen, aspirin, or aspirin containing products unless they are prescribed by your doctor, they can increase your risk of bleeding
  
10. What do I do if I miss a dose of my blood thinner?
  - If you miss your dose of your anticoagulant and only realize it at the time of your next dose, don't double up! Make note of which days you miss your doses and inform your anticoagulation provider.

This information is provided to patients for education purposes only. If patient is concerned or has questions regarding their anticoagulation care they should consult with their healthcare provider. The VA Anticoagulation clinic is happy to assist veterans with any questions or concerns regarding to their anticoagulation medications or treatment plan.