

Warfarin

Information for Patients

You have been given a medicine called Warfarin which belongs to a group of drugs known as anticoagulants (prevent blood from clotting)

Why has my doctor given me warfarin?

Warfarin can be used for various illnesses. Warfarin can be used if there is a risk of a blood clot forming in your heart, for example in heart rhythm disturbances (such as atrial fibrillation) or in some patients who have had a heart valve replacement (these blood clots can cause a stroke). Warfarin can also be used when clots are found in the heart after a heart attack.

Check with your doctor if you are still not sure why you need warfarin.

How does it work?

Warfarin increases the time it takes for your blood to clot. You will need regular blood tests while you are on warfarin. It is important that you attend for the test when requested.

How should I take my warfarin?

Always follow the instructions on the label or in the yellow booklet. This medicine is usually taken at 6.00 p.m. in the evening, however, it should always be taken at the same time each day. The dose of warfarin you are asked to take may vary from time to time but will ensure your blood is just thin enough. If you are unsure of the dose, contact the clinic or your doctor. You may be given a range of tablets which vary in strength, it is important that you take the correct combination.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

Take it as soon as you remember providing it is the same day. If you do

not remember until after midnight then do not take the dose you have missed. Take the next dose at the usual time. Do not double up the next dose.

What are the side effects of warfarin?

All drugs have side effects but most people will not experience them.

The following bruising and bleeding problems can occur in some people:-

- prolonged bleeding from cuts
- nose bleeds
- bleeding gums
- red or dark urine

Tell your doctor if these problems occur. If more serious bleeding occurs inform your doctor immediately.

Can I take other medicines while taking warfarin?

Yes, but some other medicines may affect your warfarin. It is especially important that you do not take any products containing aspirin with your warfarin, unless your doctor has prescribed aspirin for you for a specific reason. It is important that you check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any other medicines including ones that you buy over the counter.

Read the yellow anticoagulation booklet for more information. Alcohol can affect how warfarin alters your blood clotting ability. It is therefore important to limit your alcohol intake and not to “binge” drink.

This leaflet is not intended as a substitute for any advice that your doctor, nurse or pharmacist may give you.

More detailed information can be obtained from the manufacturers information leaflet.

Pharmaceutical Service	August 2016
Review date	August 2020

If you require a copy of this leaflet in any other language or format please contact us quoting the leaflet code and the language or format you require.