

Remember

- Take your medication and have your P-Time checked as recommended.
- Consistency in diet and daily activity helps maintain your prescribed level.
- Contact our Anticoagulation Clinic with any questions or concerns you may have. We are here to help.
- Do not alter your dose without consulting our clinic.

We will work with you to ensure you have a safe therapy that does not overly affect your lifestyle. Please contact our clinic so we may help you in any way possible at (717) 920-4438.

Thank you for allowing the PinnacleHealth CardioVascular Institute to assist you with all your cardiac needs.



Doctor: _____

Date: _____

Date of first blood test: _____

Starting warfarin dose: _____

Preventing Your Body from
Forming Clots It Doesn't Need

Anticoagulation Therapy

Warfarin and Prothrombin
(P Time) Testing



FACTS ABOUT Anticoagulation Therapy

The Medication

We use warfarin sodium tablets (brand name Coumadin®) as an anticoagulation agent to prevent your body from forming clots it does not need. Combined with your cardiac condition, these clots can cause serious medical problems. Warfarin is not used to treat your cardiac condition; rather we use it to prevent further complications. You should not feel any better or worse while on this medication.



⊘ Using the Anticoagulant

Warfarin is always taken once a day, no matter how much you take daily. We prefer you take your medication between 5 and 7 pm. Most people take it with their evening meal. Since your dose is personalized, you may be taking a very different dose than a friend or a relative. We gauge the strength of your dose by its effectiveness using a lab test called the Prothrombin time, or “P-Time,” or “INR.”

🕒 The P-Time

You will be tested regularly (at least monthly) while you are taking warfarin. At first, the P-Times will be done at least weekly until we find the proper dose for you. Regular P-Times are critical in the effective use of warfarin. The test is measured using an International Normalization Ratio or INR. Your cardiologist will assign a range for the INR based on your cardiac condition, personal history and anticoagulation goal. The staff in our Anticoagulation Clinic will adjust your medication accordingly and give you your next P-Time date. It is critical that you follow these instructions closely for safe and effective anticoagulation.

You will be contacted after each P-Time. If you are not contacted by 3:30 pm on the day of your test, take your warfarin as previously directed and contact our office the next business day at (717) 920-4438 for instructions. If circumstances prevent you from getting your P-Time on the recommended date (weather, vacation, conflicting appointments, etc.) get your P-Time checked the next possible date. If this is greater than one week from your appointed day please call the clinic for instruction. We will work with you whenever possible so the anticoagulation therapy does not rule your life!

☰ Factors that Affect Warfarin

Many outside influences alter the effectiveness of warfarin. Once you start your anticoagulation therapy you must contact our clinic any time you start, stop or change dose of any other medication. We will need to recheck your P-Time to see if adjustments are necessary. Vitamin K (usually found in green, leafy vegetables) can also change the dose requirements of warfarin. If your diet changes radically, please let us know as soon as possible. Alcohol can also affect the dose requirement; binge drinking should be avoided at all times. If you miss your dose or accidentally take more than prescribed, contact our office for instruction. Do not try to catch up or skip your dose.

👁️ What to Look Out for

Rarely, warfarin can cause a rash. If a rash develops within one to two weeks of initiating therapy, call the clinic. Some bruising is normal with warfarin, but a bruise that continues to spread over 24 hours needs attention. Call our clinic for instructions. Bleeding from the mouth or nose, blood in your urine or stool (blood in your stool can be red or black) or unusual pain or swelling should be brought to our attention immediately. **Do not ever stop your warfarin or alter your dose without contacting your cardiologist or the clinic.** This can lead to bigger problems than the one you are experiencing.



Please bring any other concerns to our attention. We are here to help you any way we can.