

Reference

www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/21596/spc/warfarin

Further questions

If you have any other questions regarding what you should eat, please contact your doctor or anticoagulant nurse who can give you more details.

Notes

Contact details

Anticoagulant Clinical Nurse Specialist

Telephone: 01483 571122 ext 2355
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Haematology Secretaries

Royal Surrey County Hospital

Telephone: 01483 571122 ext 2583

Royal Surrey County Hospital (RSCH) NHS Foundation Trust fully subscribes to the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) *Being Open* best practice framework, November 2010.

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located in far left corner as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–4.00pm
Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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A food guide for people taking Warfarin



Haematology Department

Vitamin K, alcohol, some foods and some herbal supplements can interfere with the action of Warfarin. It is important you try to keep a consistent diet and lifestyle to help your doctor or anticoagulant nurse regulate your Warfarin easily. If you are planning any changes to your diet or lifestyle or to take any supplements please make sure that you tell your doctor or anticoagulant nurse first.

What is Vitamin K?

Vitamin K is a vitamin found mainly in dark green leafy vegetables and is essential for normal blood clotting. However, if you suddenly start eating a lot more or a lot less of these vegetables it can affect how your Warfarin works. If you make any dietary changes make sure that your doctor or anticoagulant nurse is aware and the Warfarin can be adjusted if necessary.

Regular meals

It is important that you eat regular meals and avoid 'fasting and feasting'.

Vegetables

It is important to include at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day as part of a healthy diet. However, some vegetables are very high in vitamin K and it is important to control your intake of these. A sudden increase or decrease in intake may affect how your Warfarin works and any changes should be gradual.

Vegetable high in vitamin K include: kale, spinach, spring greens, broccoli, green cabbage, sprouts, watercress, asparagus and avocado.

Vegetables low in vitamin K include: cauliflower, courgettes, mushrooms, peas, peppers, sweet corn, swede and tomatoes.

Do include all vegetables in your diet but have a maximum of just one small portion of the foods per day. Try to include a second different vegetable to make up the quantity you would normally eat.

| Foods | Maximum portion size |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Cooked kale | 2-3 tablespoons |
| Cooked spinach | 2-3 tablespoons |
| Boiled spring greens | 2-3 tablespoons |
| Broccoli | 2-3 florets |
| Boiled green cabbage | 2-3 tablespoons |
| Sprouts | 5-8 sprouts |
| Watercress | 30g / ¼ bunch |
| Asparagus | 4 large spears / 6 small spears |
| Avocado | ⅓ fruit |
| Beef liver | 100g/4oz |

Cranberry juice

Cranberry juice contains antioxidants called flavanoids that interact with how the body breaks down the Warfarin and this can affect the action of Warfarin. However, evidence shows that cranberry juice is safe to consume in moderate amounts i.e. up to 250mls daily. Cranberry sauce in small quantities (i.e. a teaspoonful) is acceptable to use.

Herbal preparations and teas

Some herbal preparations and teas (especially green tea if you drink more than four mugs per day) may interfere with your Warfarin. It is recommended you do not take more than one supplement at any one time and make sure that your doctor or anticoagulant nurse is aware of what you are taking.

The following must not be taken whilst on Warfarin:

1. St Johns Wort
2. Danshen
3. Ginkgo Biloba
4. Glucosamine
5. Fish oil supplements

Can I take multivitamins?

Multivitamins are fine to take, if you wish, but choose a brand that does not contain vitamin K.

What about alcohol?

Drinking alcohol may affect your Warfarin. The occasional drink of two units or the regular intake of one unit should not affect your Warfarin levels. (1 unit = 125ml 9% wine, ½ pint, beer, lager, cider, 25ml spirits, 50ml fortified wine).

Regular heavy drinking or binge drinking should be avoided.

Weight loss

If you are trying to lose weight inform your doctor or anticoagulant nurse. Aim to lose weight gradually at about 1lb (0.5kg) a week. Avoid rapid weight loss as this will affect your Warfarin.

Other medication

There are also drugs and over the counter medicines that can interfere with your Warfarin. Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist can advise you regarding these.