

Warfarin and Your Diet: What You Need to Know

Warfarin (Coumadin® or Jantoven®)

Warfarin (Coumadin or Jantoven) is a medicine used to prevent blood clots. You are taking warfarin if you had a stroke, blood clot in your legs or lungs, or some heart problems (such as heart attack) or surgery.

Some vitamins, minerals, herbal products and other supplements can change the effects of warfarin. Important: Talk with your doctor before you add or stop taking any supplement(s).

Vitamin K

There are many foods that can change how warfarin works in your body, especially those that have high amounts of vitamin K. Warfarin and vitamin K work against each other. Warfarin slows down blood clotting and vitamin K helps blood to clot.

Limit these foods to small amounts if you do not normally eat them. If you do normally eat these foods, do not change the amount you eat.

- The highest sources of vitamin K include:
 - broccoli
 - brussels sprouts
 - cabbage
 - collard greens
 - endive (raw)
 - green onions (raw)
 - kale (raw leaf)
 - lettuce (raw, bibb or red leaf)
 - red leaf lettuce
 - spinach (raw leaf)
 - Swiss chard
 - turnip greens (raw)
 - watercress (raw)
 - oil (canola, salad and soybean).
- One serving size is one-half to 1 cup.
- If you want to make a major change in your diet, talk with your doctor. You may need to have your INR/CFX tested more often for a while.
- Canola, olive and soybean oils are high in vitamin K. Limit them to 2 tablespoons each day.
- Green tea has high levels of vitamin K. If you drink green tea, be consistent with how much you drink each day.
- A dietitian can help you choose foods to keep your INR/CFX stable.
- Most vitamin and mineral supplements contain vitamin K. Talk with your doctor about which supplement is right for you.

Vitamin E

High doses of vitamin E — received only through a supplement — have been shown to increase the risk of bleeding. The effect of vitamin E on warfarin is unknown.

Talk with your doctor *before* taking any vitamin E supplements.

Fish Oil Supplements

Omega-3 fatty acids supplements may increase the anticoagulant effect of warfarin. This means they may slow blood clotting.

Talk with your doctor *before* taking omega-3 fatty acid supplements.

Alcohol

Alcohol may change the effects of warfarin. Remember, have no more than one alcoholic beverage a day.

One drink equals:

- 12 ounces beer
- 4 ounces wine
- 1 ounce hard liquor.

Cranberry Products

There have been reports that cranberry products may affect the anticoagulant effects of warfarin. Talk with your doctor before adding cranberry products to your diet or if you regularly drink cranberry juice.

Vitamins, Herbs and Other Nutritional Supplements

There are many medicines, vitamins, herbs and nutritional supplements that can change how well warfarin works in your body. Talk with your doctor before you make any changes to your medicines.

Call your doctor if you are currently taking, or are thinking about taking, any of the following (not a complete list):

- ginseng
- coenzyme Q10
- fever few
- papain
- dong quai
- devil's claw
- St. John's wort
- danshen
- seaweed
- Viactiv™ calcium supplements
- salvia root
- ginkgo biloba
- garlic (in large amounts)
- kava
- ginger
- home brewed teas with tonka beans, melilot (sweet clover) or sweet woodruff
- multivitamin with vitamin K
- any other supplements not on this list.

Safety of Herbal Products

Herbal products do not go through the same safety testing as do prescription and over-the-counter medicines.

Ingredients vary and that can affect how strong and how pure the products are. Also, herbal product labels are not always accurate.

Information about herbal products is always changing. **Important:** talk with your doctor about any herbal product or dietary supplement you are taking or thinking about taking. Your doctor can tell you if the supplement may interact with your medicine(s).