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COUMADIN/WARFARIN INFORMATION

Coumadin is a blood thinner that works by blocking the effects of Vitamin K in the liver. Vitamin K allows for production of clotting factors—Coumadin blocks this effect.

Coumadin begins to work 3-5 days after first starting the dose. Prior to that, it can cause alterations in the Protime (blood test for blood thickness that is monitored for Coumadin), but it will not actually thin the blood.

Coumadin is used to prevent blood clots in:

- Atrial fibrillation (goal protime 2.0-3.0)
- Pulmonary Embolism—blood clots in the lungs (goal protime 2.0-3.0)
- DVT (Deep Venous Thrombosis)—blood clots in the legs (goal protime 2.0-3.0)
- Congestive Heart Failure (goal protime 2.0-3.0)
- Peripheral Vascular Disease (goal protime 2.0-3.0)
- Strokes (goal protime 2.0-3.0)
- Mechanical Heart Valve(goal protime 2.5-3.5)
- Post-operative blood clot prevention (goal protime 2.0-3.0)

Facts and Recommendations for taking Coumadin:

THE PROTOME BLOOD TEST:

The name of the blood test for monitoring Coumadin is called the Protime. This test is expressed as a ratio of normal blood clotting vs. blood clotting in your body on Coumadin.

GOAL NUMBERS (SEE ABOVE)

Normal people have a PROTOME=1.0

Atrial Fibrillation: Goal PROTOME=2.0-3.0

Blood Clot Prevention (leg or lung): Goal PROTOME= 2.0-3.0

Artificial Heart Valve (mechanical): Goal PROTImE= 2.5-3.5

KNOW YOUR DOSE OF COUMADIN/WARFARIN---KNOW YOUR COLORS
(COMMON DOSES):

1MG=PINK
2MG=PURPLE
2.5MG=LIGHT GREEN
5MG=PEACH
7.5MG=YELLOW

DIET:

I do not make any specific recommendations and dietary restrictions. We will adjust your Coumadin dose to your diet. That said, if you eat a very large and unusual quantity of Vitamin K-containing vegetables (See list below) then a check of your protime may be indicated.

TESTING FREQUENCY—HOW OFTEN DO YOU CHECK THE PROTImE?

Generally speaking, monthly blood tests are appropriate. Special exceptions are:

1. When you begin Coumadin, at first, blood level testing is frequent until your baseline is established
2. If you are demonstrating wide fluctuations in the Protime.
3. If you have consistently perfect Protimes, you can go to every other month testing
4. Home monitoring can be arranged if you are interested...ask us about this

INTERACTION WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS:

Coumadin does interact with other medications often, but the amount of interaction tends to be mild. Testing the PROTImE if you are on an antibiotic for a week is a reasonable thing to do, but is not required. Often the pharmacist will mention interactions of other medications with Coumadin. This is rarely a concern.

ASPIRIN AND COUMADIN:

Aspirin is not to be used with Coumadin unless you ask specifically and get the OK. We do combine them on occasion in patients with heart disease, but only for specific purposes

TYLENOL AND COUMADIN:

This is fine to combine. No worries. Tylenol is the preferred mild pain medication for patients on Coumadin. If you use high dosages (4000mg daily) for over a week, then checking the protime blood test is sensible, as it can interact with high dosages of ongoing Tylenol.

ADVIL/ALEVE AND COUMADIN:

Generally, these medications are avoided when you are on Coumadin, but they can be used at times. Generally, this should be under my direction. If you choose to use these medications, the safest way to do so is to take a 'stomach protector' pill like PRILOSEC or PREVACID. This will prevent excessive bleeding in the stomach. Ranitidine (Zantac) and Famotidine (Pepcid) will not prevent such bleeding and are not used as a stomach protector in this situation generally.

HIGH VITAMIN K CONTAINING VEGETABLES:

- Brussel Sprouts
- Collard Greens
- Green Onions
- Kale
- Mustard Greens
- Parsley
- Spinach
- Swiss Chard
- Turnip Greens