

Title: A guide to maintaining a stable INR while on Warfarin therapy

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Date: 4/27/2008

Key words: Warfarin, INR, drug interactions, vitamin K

Abstract: Information for patients on chronic warfarin therapy regarding interactions with commonly prescribed medications, and effect of diet on INR.

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# Are you on Chronic Warfarin Therapy?

## Do you have trouble keeping your INR stable?

If so, the information below may help you gain better control of your INR

### What is Warfarin?

Warfarin (Coumadin) is a medication that works to “thin” the blood by inhibiting proteins in the blood that form clots.

### Why is maintaining a stable INR important?

The INR is a blood test that measures the ability of the blood to form a clot. It is the most widely used test to measure the effectiveness of Warfarin. If the INR is too high (too much Warfarin) there is a risk of the blood being too “thin” and excessive bleeding. If the INR is too low (not enough Warfarin) there is a risk of blood clots.

### Why do certain medications affect my INR?

That has to do with how the body metabolizes medications. Warfarin is metabolized by certain enzymes in the liver. Some medications alter how fast these enzymes can breakdown Warfarin which can then increase or decrease the effectiveness of Warfarin.

#### Common Medications that increase the effect of Warfarin:

-**Antibiotics:** Erythromycin, Metronidazole (Flagyl), tetracycline, Ciprofloxacin  
-**Antifungals:** Fluconazole, Miconazole, Itraconazole  
-**Others:** Cimetidine (Tagamet), Omeprazole (Prilosec), Acetaminophen (Tylenol)

#### Common Medications that decrease the effect of Warfarin:

-**Anti-seizure:** Phenobarbital, Carbamazepine (Tegretol)  
-**Antibiotics:** Nafcillin, Rifampin

\*for a complete list of medications affecting Warfarin talk to your Doctor.

### Can diet affect my INR?

Yes, Warfarin inhibits proteins that require vitamin K in order to work properly. Therefore, a diet HIGH in Vitamin K can DECREASE the effects of Warfarin. The opposite is also true; a diet LOW in Vitamin K can INCREASE the effects of Warfarin. Also a diet high in AVACADO can DECREASE the effects of Warfarin.

\*\*The key to a maintaining a stable INR is consistency throughout your diet.

Studies have shown that diets higher in vitamin K have more consistent INR levels.

\*\*\*Talk to you Doctor if you have had any changes in your medications or changes in your diet, as your dose of Warfarin may need to be adjusted.