PATIENT EDUCATION

Self INR Testing
About self INR testing

Your dosage of anticoagulant medication is adjusted based on the results of a blood test. This blood test is called your international normalized ratio (INR). A health care team member or a team member at a laboratory may test your INR once a month.

However, you may be able to test your INR yourself, called self INR testing or home INR monitoring. To be able to do self INR testing, you have to meet certain criteria which may include:

- Your dose of anticoagulant medication has been stable for about three months.
- You have been diagnosed with certain conditions.

If you do self INR testing, your health care provider will continue to prescribe your anticoagulant medication dosing and renew your prescriptions.

If you have questions about self INR testing, talk with your health care provider.
Self INR testing advantages

Advantages of self INR testing include:

More time in your goal range. Weekly INR testing helps keep your INR in the range that is best for you to help ensure your safety.

Increased awareness of what affects your INR. Because you test weekly, you will be better able to tell what affects your INR. This will help you make good choices and give you a better chance for keeping your INR in goal range.

Convenience. You can test your INR without going to your health care provider or a laboratory.

⚠️ For your safety, do not allow anyone else to use your INR testing equipment.
Your responsibilities

Before you start self INR testing, you must complete a training program. During the training program, you will:

• Listen to an overview of self INR testing.
• Learn about testing equipment and how to get supplies.
• Learn how to test your INR.

In addition, you must agree to:

• Test your INR once a week or as directed by your health care provider.
• Record your INR test results.
• Follow dosing guidelines your provider gives you to ensure you take the correct dose of medication. **Do not change your dosage unless directed by your health care provider.**
• Report your test results and anticoagulant medication dosages to your health care provider once a month. You can report this information by telephone, FAX, Internet or mail. This reporting is needed to ensure your INR is managed safely. To report your test results:
  – Call this number:

  ——

  – Send a FAX to this number:

  ——

  – Use this other method:

  ——
• Call your health care provider:
  – **If your INR is out of goal range.**
  – Before you have any test or procedure that requires you to stop taking your anticoagulant medication.
  – Before you start or if you stop taking any medication, including over-the-counter medications, herbal supplements and vitamins.
  – If you are admitted to a hospital.
  – If you have major bleeding.
  – If you have symptoms of clotting.

• Meet with your health care provider as scheduled. Bring with you to these appointments the chart you use to record your INR test results and anticoagulant dosages.

⚠️ Do not abuse alcohol or illegal substances while you take anticoagulant medication.
Stopping self INR testing

For health and safety reasons, your health care provider may ask you to stop self INR testing if you do not follow the requirements such as:

- You are not following the instructions you were given during the training program.
- You are not providing INR results and anticoagulant dosages once a month to your health care provider.
- You are not responding to communications from your health care provider.
- You are not meeting with your health care provider as scheduled.
An important partnership

Taking anticoagulant medication requires careful monitoring. To do self INR testing, you and your health care provider must partner to ensure your safety.

Call your health care provider:

• If you cannot follow the self INR testing requirements after starting.
• You want to stop the program for any reason.
• If you have questions about self INR testing or you would like more information about taking anticoagulant medication.
Notes
Mrs. Lips, a resident of San Antonio, Texas, was a loyal Mayo Clinic patient of more than 40 years and a self-made business leader who significantly expanded her family’s activities in oil, gas and ranching. Upon her death in 1995, Mrs. Lips paid the ultimate compliment by leaving her entire estate to Mayo Clinic. By naming the Barbara Woodward Lips Patient Education Center, Mayo honors her generosity, her love of learning, her belief in patient empowerment and her dedication to high-quality care.

This material is for your education and information only. This content does not replace medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. New medical research may change this information. If you have questions about a medical condition, always talk with your health care provider.