MAYO CLINIC

Patient Education

# Warfarin

## I take warfarin.

### Taking over-the-counter medications while taking warfarin



## Facts:

- Illness and the medications you take for illness can affect how warfarin (Jantoven) works.
- Your international normalized ratio (INR) may need to be checked more often while you are feeling ill.

**Note:** You may know warfarin by the brand name Coumadin, which is no longer available.

## Effects of medications and over-the-counter products:

- Aspirin and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen and naproxen (Aleve and Naprosyn) may increase your risk of bleeding.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol, others) and antibiotics may raise your INR, which may increase your risk of bleeding.
- Menthol, which is in many cough drops, may lower your INR, which increases your risk of clotting.
- Teas and herbal or dietary supplements can raise or lower your INR.

## Recommendations:

### Talk to the healthcare professional who manages your warfarin

- Before you take any new over-the-counter medications.
- If you are taking regularly scheduled acetaminophen for more than 2 days.
- If you start taking a new prescription medication, such as an antibiotic.
- If you get sick, especially if you have:
  - Signs of infections, which include:
    - Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or greater.
    - Chills.
- Diarrhea, decreased appetite, or you are throwing up for longer than 24 hours.
- Chest pain or shortness of breath.

## Drug-free options to help you feel better

- Increasing fluid intake, including water, low-sodium soup broth, or electrolyte drinks (sports drinks).
- Getting extra rest.
- Using a humidifier to loosen mucus and promote sinus drainage.
- Raising the head of your bed by using more pillows when you sleep.

## Over-the-counter products that may be used with warfarin

Avoid over-the-counter products with multiple ingredients if possible.

| Nasal symptoms (congestion or runny nose) | Aches, pains or fever | Sore throat | Cough |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Saline nasal spray, drops, or neti pot rinse<br>• Antihistamines, such as loratadine (Claritin), cetirizine (Zyrtec), levocetirizine (Xyzal), or fexofenadine (Allegra)<br>• Cromolyn nasal spray | • Acetaminophen (Tylenol, others) not more than 2,000 mg in a 24-hour time frame | • Saline (salt water) mouth rinse<br>• Local anesthetic spray such as phenol throat spray<br>• Menthol-free lozenges or cough drops | • Menthol-free lozenges or cough drops<br>• Honey<br>• Guaifenesin (Mucinex) |

Talk to your healthcare professional before starting or stopping any over-the-counter products.

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