

Patient Information

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Dietary Advice for People Taking Warfarin Tablets

This leaflet is intended for people taking warfarin tablets. If you have any concerns with your current medication, please speak to your GP, specialist cardiology nurse or dietitian.

- Do not stop taking warfarin without speaking to your doctor first.
- Never take more than the prescribed dose or give your tablets to others.
- Do not take medicines that contain aspirin unless prescribed by your Doctor.

Please note that when purchasing healthcare products and medications over the counter, the pharmacist should be informed that you will be taking warfarin alongside the item. Pharmacists are obliged to discuss your treatment and current medication, when items are purchased alongside warfarin.

Warfarin

Warfarin is used to prevent and treat the formation of harmful blood clots within the body. Warfarin works by thinning the blood, therefore you should be careful not to knock, cut or bruise yourself. The blood thins when the effects of vitamin K are reduced.

How do I know my warfarin is working?

Your doctor will complete a blood test to check your International Normalised Ratio or INR is within the target range. The longer your blood takes to clot, the higher your INR, which will determine your warfarin dose.



Dietary advice when taking warfarin

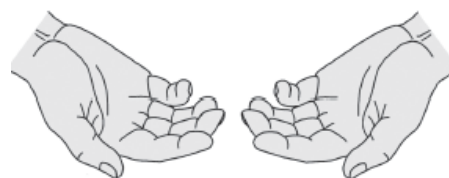
Vitamin K is essential for blood clotting and is found in the food we eat. This means it is important to keep your intake of foods containing vitamin K consistent. If you make significant changes to your diet, such as increasing or decreasing foods containing vitamin K, it could affect how your warfarin works.

Vitamin K: This vitamin is mainly found in dark green, leafy vegetables and is essential for normal blood clotting.

Green vegetables are also a source of folate, an antioxidant which protects the body from damage. Healthy eating guidelines recommend including five portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Consequently it is not recommended to exclude foods containing vitamin K all together.

The foods below are particularly high in vitamin K, so keep to no more than one portion only of these vegetables each day, unless you have discussed an alternative with your GP.

Foods to limit – choose one portion per day	
Kale	3 dessert spoons
Avocado	Half an avocado
Spinach (boiled)	3 dessert spoons
Spring greens (boiled)	4 dessert spoons
Broccoli	6 – 7 small/medium florets
Green cabbage (boiled)	4 dessert spoons
Sprouts	12 sprouts
Watercress	Quarter bunch
Asparagus	10 spears



One portion = one handful

Patient Information

Coleslaw	2 tablespoons
Beef liver	4oz (100g)

Alongside a small portion of the foods listed above, it is recommended to add a second serving of a different vegetable low in vitamin K. If you have more than one portion of the same food, it will only count as one of your 5-a-day. Below are some examples of fruit and vegetables low in vitamin K:

Examples of foods low in vitamin K – have <u>unlimited</u> portions per day	
Food	One portion
Cauliflower	8 florets
Courgettes	½ a large courgette
Mushroom	3 – 4 dessert spoons
Peas	3 dessert spoons
Peppers	½ pepper
Swede	½ cup (80g)
Tomatoes	1 medium tomato
Carrots	3 dessert spoons
Lettuce	½ cup (80g)

Patient Information

Herbal preparations

Some herbal supplements and teas may interfere with warfarin. People taking warfarin are advised to not drink more than four mugs of green tea per day. Please ensure that your GP and dietitian are aware of any supplementation, as it is not recommended to take more than one supplement at a time. If you are unsure if a supplement is safe to take with warfarin, please seek advice from your GP or pharmacist.

The following products must not be taken with Warfarin:

St John's Wort	Glucosamine
Danshen	Cranberry juice
Cod liver oil	Cranberry juice tablets/capsules
Ginkgo Biloba	Evening primrose oil
Grapefruit juice	

Multivitamins

These are fine to take, but choose a brand without vitamin K.

Alcohol

No more than 14 units of alcohol per week and at least two alcohol-free days are recommended. The occasional drink of two units or regular intake of one unit should not affect your warfarin. Regular heavy and binge-drinking should be avoided. Please see www.drinkaware.co.uk for more information on units.

Dental health

Please inform your dentist that you are on warfarin. Use a soft toothbrush and take care when using dental floss.

Contact numbers

024 7696 6161 (University Hospital)

01788 663473 (Hospital of St Cross, Rugby)

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The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 02476 966161 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

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