

Warfarin Eating Plan

What is warfarin?

Warfarin is a type of medicine called an **anticoagulant** [an-tye-coh-AG-yoo-lehnt]. These medicines help prevent blood clots. They are usually prescribed for the treatment of certain heart, lung, and blood vessel diseases because they can help prevent heart attacks and strokes. You may know of warfarin by its brand names “Coumadin” or “Jantoven.”

What is a warfarin eating plan?

Vitamin K is found in many foods and helps your blood clot properly. But, it can change the way warfarin works. **When taking warfarin, you have to be consistent in the amount of vitamin K you eat from week to week.** This helps make sure that the warfarin dose is working correctly in your body and not putting you at risk for blood clots or bleeding.

How does it work?

- 1 The back of this handout gives a list of foods which are high in vitamin K. **Your “plan” is to be consistent in the way you eat these foods.** Most dark green leafy vegetables are high in vitamin K. But so are some other foods and oils. You can't eat “too many” or “too few” natural sources of vitamin K. In fact, you should continue to eat high-vitamin K foods consistently over the course of each week. For example, if you were eating 4 salads a week before starting warfarin, you should continue to eat 4 salads a week while taking warfarin.
- 2 **Avoid alcohol.** Alcohol changes the way warfarin works, making it difficult to manage your warfarin dose. If you drink and don't want to quit, be consistently moderate in your alcohol intake. For example, 1 daily drink for women, and 1 to 2 a day for men.



What do I need to do next?

- 1 Make a list of the foods you commonly eat and how often you eat them.
- 2 Work with your dietitian to figure out a food plan that works for your schedule and your family's budget.
- 3 Follow your food plan and make adjustments with you dietitian as needed.
- 4 Get your INR checked as often as your doctor recommends to make sure you are getting the right dose of warfarin.

My follow-up appointment

Date/Time: _____

Place: _____

Doctor: _____

3 Avoid certain supplements and herbal products. These include:

- **Herbal teas containing coumarin**, such as chamomile, tonka bean, sweet clover or melilot, or sweet woodruff.
- **Herbal supplements**, such as dashen, dong quai, red clover, echinacea, ginseng, ginkgo biloba, and feverfew.
- **Supplements**, such as fish oil, walnut oil, flaxseed oil, garlic oil, ginger, onion extract pills, vitamin C or E (in amounts greater than the recommended dietary allowance), coenzyme Q-10, glucosamine, and alfalfa **unless your doctor specifically approves their use.** **Note:** In food or food seasoning, fish oil, garlic, onion, ginger, and vitamins C and E are fine.

Food group	Rich in vitamin K: Keep your intake of these consistent
Milk and dairy products 	Soy milk
Vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark green leafy vegetables: chard, kale, spinach, lettuce (bibb, endive, iceberg, red leaf), parsley, watercress, beet greens, collard greens, mustard greens, and turnip greens • Broccoli and cauliflower
Fruits and fruit juice 	*None are rich in vitamin K. Your doctor may tell you to avoid drinking grapefruit juice at the same time that you take your Coumadin (doctor advice varies).
Grains	*None are rich in vitamin K.
Meats and meat substitutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liver (beef, pork, and chicken) and liverwurst • Beef heart • Soybeans
Fats and oils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canola oil • Soybean oil • Fat substitutes (such as Olestra) • Margarine, mayonnaise, and salad dressing made from canola or soybean oil
Sweets and desserts	*None are rich in vitamin K.
Other: teas, herbs, supplements 	<p>Check with your doctor before taking any herbs or supplements. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green tea, black tea • Tea leaves • Seaweed (often used in sushi) • Alfalfa

*Fruits, fruit juice, grains, sweets, and desserts are all LOW in vitamin K and will not affect your warfarin.

Where can I learn more?

An Intermountain dietitian can answer questions about this eating plan. If you have questions about your medicine or symptoms, ask your doctor. To locate an Intermountain dietitian, visit intermountainhealthcare.org.

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