

COUMADIN: What you need to know

Coumadin (Warfarin) is a blood thinner that helps to prevent blood clots. Blood clots may cause strokes, heart attacks, deep vein thrombosis (clot in the leg), and pulmonary embolus (clot in the lung). There are proteins in your blood that can turn into clots with the help of Vitamin K. Coumadin works by blocking the effects of Vitamin K so it is harder for your body to form clots. To make sure you are getting the right amount of medicine, a blood test called Protime/INR is run periodically. This measures how long it takes for your blood to clot. A result between 2-3 means the current dose of Coumadin is correct. Less than 2 means you need more Coumadin while more than 3 means you need less Coumadin. Anything that interferes with Vitamin K can affect your PT/INR level. Since there is Vitamin K in many of the foods we eat, there are many foods that can affect how much medicine is needed. It is not necessary to stop eating these foods but it is necessary to eat the same amounts of these foods every day. Eating a lot of food high in Vitamin K on one day can affect the PT/INR.

There are also foods that affect how your liver clears Coumadin from your body which also can raise the PT/INR. These include alcohol, cranberry products, and grapefruit. These products should be avoided.

Medications both prescription and over the counter medications can also interfere with Coumadin. All medications should be discussed with your doctor to decide which ones are safe to continue

Vitamin K Content of Selected Foods

Vegetables

Low Vitamin K Content:

Green beans, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Corn, Cucumber, Eggplant, Mushrooms, Green pepper, Onions, Potato, Pumpkin, Sauerkraut, Tomato

Moderate Vitamin K Content:

Asparagus, Avocado, Red Cabbage, Green peas, Pickle, Iceberg Lettuce

High Vitamin K Content:

Broccoli, Brussels sprout, Cabbage, Collard greens, Endive, Kale, Bib Lettuce, Mustard greens, Parsley, Spinach, Turnip greens, Watercress

Fruits

Low Vitamin K Content:

Apple, Banana, Blueberries, Grapes, Orange

Meats

Low Vitamin K Content:

Beef, Chicken, Pork, Tuna, Turkey

Fats and Oils

Low Vitamin K Content

Corn Oil, Peanut oil, Safflower oil, Sesame oil, Sunflower oil

Moderate Vitamin K Content

Margarine, Olive oil

High Vitamin K Content

Mayonnaise, Canola Oil, Soybean oil

Dairy Products & Beverages

Low Vitamin K Content

Butter, Cheese, Eggs, Sour Cream, Yogurt, Coffee, Cola, Fruit Juices, Milk, Tea

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What you need to know!



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