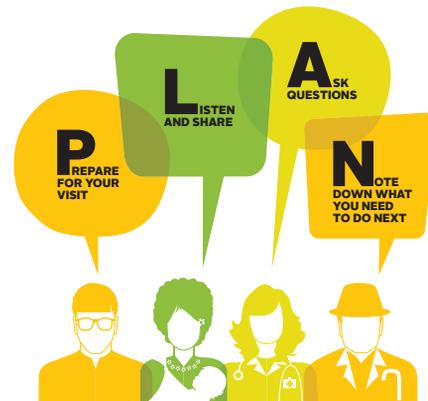


Reducing harm from high-risk medicines



Warfarin

What is it for?

Warfarin is used to stop harmful blood clots forming in your blood vessels by making your blood take longer to clot. It is an anticoagulant.

What is its name?

Warfarin is the medicine name but there are two brand names – MAREVAN Tablets™ and COUMADIN®. The two brands should not be mixed and you should only take one brand all the time. The brand used most often is MAREVAN.

How and when do I take it?

Warfarin should be taken once a day, at about the same time each day, washed down with a glass of water. Evening is best so you can have blood tests in the morning. The blood tests measure your blood's clotting time and are called INR (international normalised ratio) tests. The test results are used to make sure your warfarin dose is right.

How long do I need to take it for?

This depends on why you are having warfarin. Your doctor will tell you how long you need to take it for.

What could happen if I stop taking it?

You could get a harmful blood clot because your blood will clot more quickly.

What are the side effects? What should I do if I get these?

The most common side effects are from bleeding. Call a doctor straight away if you develop any of the following:

- Nose bleeds that last more than 10 minutes
- Vomiting or diarrhoea
- Fever or infection
- Passing blood in your urine
- Passing red or black bowel motions
- Severe bruising or bruising that suddenly appears
- Unusual headaches
- For women, heavy or increased bleeding during your period or any other vaginal bleeding
- A skin rash or itching.

Other things to check with your pharmacist (chemist)

- Always ask about other medicines, herbal supplements and other alternative medicines before you take them. Many can change the way warfarin works.
- There are four strengths of warfarin tablets – 1mg, 2mg, 3mg and 5mg. Each strength is a different colour. Always check your dose and the strength and colour of the tablets you are given, especially if your dose has changed.
- Ask about food and alcohol use while you are taking warfarin because they can interfere with the effect of this medicine.

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