

Warfarin (Coumadin) interactions with foods and other medications

Warfarin (Coumadin) is a blood-thinning medication that helps treat and prevent blood clots. Certain foods can impair the effect of warfarin. For this reason, it's important to pay attention to your diet while taking this medication.

The main dietary concern related to taking warfarin has to do with the amount of vitamin K in your diet. Vitamin K plays an important role in blood clotting. Warfarin works to reduce clotting by diminishing the activity of vitamin K. Eating large amounts of vitamin K can counteract the benefits of warfarin.

The key is to be **consistent** about how much vitamin K you consume on a daily basis.

Avoid the following foods that are high in vitamin K (though a *small* amount of no more than a one quarter serving [1/8 cup cooked or 1/4 cup raw] per day of these foods is unlikely to interfere much with Warfarin):

- Green leafy vegetables: e.g. Kale, Collards, Spinach, Turnip greens, Mustard greens, Chard, Salad greens
- Broccoli, Cabbage & Brussels sprouts
- Parsley
- All sea vegetables (e.g. seaweed)
- Fermented soybean products such as natto or miso - avoid completely

But you **should** have a total of **3 servings of vegetables per day**, every day. These can include any other vegetables besides those listed above. A serving size of vegetables is defined as ½ cooked or 1 cup raw. It is preferable that the vegetables are varied colors (e.g. yellow yams, red sweet peppers, green beans), because this gives one different classes of phytonutrients important for health. Strive to be as consistent as possible in getting your 3 servings per day. Preferable vegetables in this group with especially low Vitamin K levels include: carrots, cauliflower, cucumbers, green beans & peas, okra, potatoes, tomatoes. The only form of lettuce you can have is iceberg.

Likewise, have a total of **2 whole fruit of different colors per day**. These can be any fruit besides large amounts of cranberries or papaya.

In addition to foods containing vitamin K, certain beverages can increase the effect of warfarin, leading to bleeding problems:

- Large amounts of concentrated Cranberry juice (but up to 1 cup/day is ok)
- Alcohol (don't drink any without specifically discussing with your physician)

List of some more common examples of drugs, *foods*, and *herbs* that have **major** interactions with Warfarin and should generally be avoided (*not* all inclusive):

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| ◇ Aspirin (Thins blood)-established | ◇ Naproxen [Naprosyn, Aleve] |
| ◇ Celecoxib [Celebrex] (probable) | (probable) |
| ◇ Cilostazol [Pletal] (probable) | ◇ <i>Papaya (theoretical)</i> |
| ◇ Clopidogrel [Plavix] (probable) | ◇ Ropinirole [Requip] (probable) |
| ◇ <i>Cranberry (probable)</i> | ◇ Simvastatin [Zocor]-established |
| ◇ Duloxetine [Cymbalta] (probable) | ◇ <i>St John's Wort (probable)</i> |
| ◇ Fenofibrate [Tricor, Lipofen or
Lofibra or Triglide] (probable) | ◇ Sulfamethoxazole [an ingredient in
timethoprim/sulfamethoxazole]
(probable) |
| ◇ <i>Garlic (probable) large amounts
thin the blood. (small amounts in
food probably ok)</i> | ◇ Tamoxifen [Soltamox] (probable) |
| ◇ <i>Ginkgo (Thins blood) (probable)</i> | ◇ <i>Tan-Shen [danshen] (probable)</i> |
| ◇ Ketoprofen (probable) | |
| ◇ Moxifloxacin [Avelox]-established | |

Any broad spectrum antibiotic may also increase Warfarin effect (increase PT/INR) by killing off gut bacteria that form Vit. K

Call your doctor if:

- You notice *unexpected* bruising or bleeding from anywhere (e.g. a nosebleed), even if the amount of bleeding itself is minor. This may be a sign that your blood is 'too thin' (PT/INR too high), and you should get a PT/INR re-checked.
- You start, stop or significantly change the dose of any medication, including over the counter medications or botanical medicines. This is because many medications can interfere with warfarin, altering how thin your blood is.
- You have an illness significant enough to put you in bed for a couple of days, such as persistent fever, stomach upset or diarrhea or are planning surgery.
- You have a major change in your diet, or are unable to eat for several days.
- Any other significant concern about your warfarin or health.

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