

OUTPATIENT - WARFARIN MANAGEMENT



If you have any English language difficulties, please ask staff to book an interpreter.

From home contact the Telephone Interpreter Service on 13 1450.

Services are provided free of charge. Ask staff if this information is available in your preferred language.

What is warfarin?

Warfarin is an anticoagulant (reduces blood clotting) or 'blood thinning' agent. Its effect can be monitored by a blood test called on INR.

Warfarin is used to reduce the chance of blood clots occurring or recurring by interfering with the action of vitamin K.

Warfarin is often recommended for the following conditions:

- blood clots, such as deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism
- irregular heart beat (atrial fibrillation)
- heart valve replacement
- other heart problems

What is an INR?

INR (International Normalised Ratio) is a blood test used worldwide exclusively for monitoring patients on oral anticoagulants such as warfarin.

What is the aim of your warfarin therapy?

The aim of your warfarin therapy is to maintain your INR within your recommended therapeutic target range.

Your doctor advises us of the target range that is appropriate for your clinical condition.

Your warfarin dose will be specific to you because different people require different amounts of warfarin.

When warfarin is commenced there is a settling- in period when more frequent blood tests and changes in your dose may be required. Eventually, most people will have a stable pattern of testing; weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

A high INR can increase your risk of bleeding. We will notify you about what you should do if your INR test becomes too high. You may be required to hold your dose and sometimes you may be required to go to hospital. We will also notify your treating doctor.

How will you receive your dose instructions?

Eastern Health Pathology aims to have your dose instructions available for you on the day of your blood test. Laboratory staff from the testing laboratory will call you late afternoon or early evening on the day of your blood test for your dose instructions.

If for some reason you have not been contacted, you may contact the laboratory directly yourself before you take your evening dose. If this is not possible it is important to maintain the same dose that you have been on previously and ensure that contact with the laboratory is made the next day.

The laboratory contact details are

Angliss Hospital	-	9764 6135
Box Hill Hospital	-	9895 4905
Healesville Collection Centre	-	5969 9949
Maroondah Hospital	-	9871 3572
Wellington Road Collection Rooms		9981 2791
Tecoma Collection Rooms	-	9754 1441

Your responsibilities as a patient

- Continue to visit your doctor – please inform your doctor if you experience any bruising, bleeding, or illness; also discuss with your doctor any changes you have made to your medications (including herbal medicines, vitamins and dietary supplements)
- Comply with your warfarin dose instructions and have your tests on dates scheduled by the laboratory
- Complete our current patient questionnaire fully each time you have a INR test and include any changes in medication
- Provide us with accurate, up-to-date personal contact details
- Contact the laboratory if you intend to stop, or have stopped, taking warfarin for any reason
- You must never double your next dose if you have forgotten to take a dose
- Please advise a contact phone number where you may be contacted on the day your INR testing is done

What you should do if you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy?

If you are considering pregnancy and are taking warfarin, you must discuss your intention with your doctor before ceasing contraception.

If you become pregnant while on warfarin please contact your doctor immediately.

What you should do if you are going on a holiday

Please discuss with your doctor well before you travel. You will need a letter from your doctor with the details of your diagnosis and the last 8 – 10 results and doses. You may need to have your INR performed and dosed at you holiday location while you are away. Please request a copy of these results and take these with you when you return to Eastern Health for dosing so that we can update your history.

What happens to my test result?

Your doctor receives a report of your test result and dose instructions that are stored in your medical history.

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Protecting Your Privacy

Eastern Health is committed to protecting your privacy. We will keep your personal information secure and will disclose information about you only when required by law. We comply with relevant information and privacy legislation. If you would like more information, please ask a staff member or visit our Web site www.easternhealth.org.au
Eastern Health is accredited by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards.

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