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Vitamin K and Medications

What Do I Need to Know?

If your doctor has prescribed coumadin or Warfarin to “thin” your blood, you need to watch how much vitamin K you get from food and dietary supplements.

Why Was Warfarin (Coumadin) Prescribed?

Coumadin or Warfarin interferes with vitamin K so that your blood clots more slowly. The doctor uses a test called INR to make sure that your blood will not clot too quickly or too slowly. Changing how much vitamin K you get can change your INR. This change could result in bleeding or an unwanted blood clot.

How Does Warfarin Work?

- Take your medicine exactly as your doctor directed.
- Keep your vitamin K intake about the same. It is as simple as 1-2-3:
 1. Keep your intake of high vitamin K foods consistent. You might plan to eat no more than ½ cup of these foods per day. If you like these foods and eat them often, you can eat more, but you should be consistent. For example, you could eat about a cup of one of these foods on most days.
 2. Do not have large changes in the medium vitamin K foods you eat. For instance, it would not be wise to eat coleslaw at every meal and then stop eating it entirely.
 3. Make careful decisions about dietary supplements.
 - You can take a daily multivitamin (many contain 25 micrograms of vitamin K/tablet).
 - If you do not regularly eat green vegetables, a multi-vitamin can be helpful. Remember to do it every day.
 - Do not take supplements that contain large amounts of vitamin K (more than 100 micrograms/day).

Which Foods Have Vitamin K?

Food	Amount	Vitamin K (mcg)
Kale, cooked	½ cup	531
Spinach, cooked	½ cup	444
Collard greens, cooked	½ cup	418
Mustard greens, cooked	½ cup	210
Spinach, raw	1 cup	145
Broccoli, cooked	½ cup	110
Brussels sprouts	½ cup cooked	109

Lettuce, green leaf, raw	1 cup	97
Cabbage, cooked	½ cup	81
Lettuce, romaine, raw	1 cup	57
Asparagus	4 spears	48
Broccoli, raw	½ cup	45
Kiwi fruit	1 medium	31
Blackberries or blueberries, raw	1 cup	29
Pickles, cucumber, dill or kosher dill	1 pickle	25
Grapes (red or green)	1 cup	23
Peas, cooked	½ cup	19

Supplements

Dietary supplements can affect how your blood clots. Use only supplements approved by your physician or registered dietitian.

Generally, it is not wise to take vitamin E or fish oil supplements.

Herbal supplements to avoid include alfalfa, arnica, bilberry, butchers broom, cat's claw, dong quai, feverfew, forskolin, garlic, ginger, ginkgo, horse chestnut, inositol hexaphosphate, licorice, meililot (sweet clover), pau d'arco, red clover, St. John's wort, sweet woodruff, turmeric, willow bark, and wheat grass.

Your registered dietitian may restrict cranberry juice depending on your diet.

Notes