

Diet and Warfarin (Coumadin)

If your doctor has prescribed warfarin (Coumadin), there are some foods that can affect the way warfarin works in your body. These include foods with high amounts of vitamin K, cranberries, alcohol and some herbs.

Foods with Vitamin K

The amount of vitamin K in your diet can affect the amount (dose) of warfarin you need to take. Your medicine dose must be balanced with your diet to give the best drug effect. A few things to remember when taking warfarin:

- You **do not** have to follow a diet low in vitamin K. In fact, not getting enough vitamin K can lead to weak bones and other problems. It is more important to **eat foods with vitamin K in about the same amount from week to week**. If you greatly increase or decrease these foods in your diet, let your doctor know. Eating more or less of these foods than you usually do may change the way your blood clots while taking warfarin.
- The foods listed below and on the next page have very high or high amount of vitamin K in them. **Eat about the same amount of vitamin K containing foods each week while taking warfarin**. For example, if you often eat a lettuce salad each day, continue to do so.
- Ask your doctor if you should take a multiple vitamin with vitamin K in it each day. This may help to keep your vitamin K level the same so your warfarin dose stays the same.
- Call the Department of Nutrition Services at (614) 293-8658 with questions.

Foods Very High in Vitamin K

Leafy vegetables such as kale, spinach, turnip greens, collard greens, beet greens and mustard greens.

Foods High in Vitamin K

Olestra

Foods with Olestra (Olean) often have fat soluble vitamins added, including vitamin K. These foods should be considered as a source of vitamin K if they are included in your diet.

Cranberries

Avoid eating cranberries, cranberry juice or cranberry supplements while taking warfarin. It can change the way warfarin works in your body.

Alcohol

Drinking alcohol is not recommended with this medicine. You should talk to your doctor if you plan to drink alcohol because more than 1 or 2 drinks can change the way your body responds to the medicine.

Herbs

Use of herbal supplements may cause problems with warfarin. Several popular herbs such as ginseng, St. John's wort, ginger, garlic and ginkgo biloba have been reported to affect how your body uses warfarin. Tell your doctor, pharmacist or dietitian if you are taking any herbal preparations or using any herbal teas or other products. Use of herbs in cooking, such as garlic and ginger, are safe to eat while you are on warfarin.

Remember to tell your doctor or pharmacist when you plan on changing the amount of foods, drinks or herbal supplements you consume.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.

Diet taken from Ohio State University Health website.