Diet and Warfarin

Your doctor has prescribed the medicine warfarin (Coumadin®, Jantoven®) for you. There are some foods that can affect the way warfarin works in your body. These include foods with high amounts of vitamin K, alcohol, and some herbal and dietary supplements.

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 allow the drug to work correctly.

A few things to remember when taking warfarin:

- You want a medium or moderate amount of vitamin K in the foods you eat. You do not need a diet low in vitamin K. In fact, not getting enough vitamin K can lead to weak bones and other problems. It is best to continue your usual diet while the warfarin dose is being established. Let your healthcare provider know if you eat many foods listed on the next page that are high in vitamin K.

- It is more important to eat moderate amounts of foods with vitamin K in about the same amount from week to week. Eating more or less of these foods than usual may change the way warfarin works in your body and may increase your risk of bleeding or blood clots. For example: if you eat cooked greens, it is much better to eat ½ cup each day instead of eating 2 or 3 cups once a week.

- The foods listed on the next page are very high or high in vitamin K. You can eat these foods, but you should limit the total amounts you eat. This helps to avoid large increases in the amount of vitamin K you take in from food.

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Learn more about your health care.
Foods Very High in Vitamin K
You can eat 1 cup raw or ½ cup cooked total per day unless another amount is listed:

- Beet greens
- Collard greens
- Dandelion greens
- Kale
- Mustard greens
- Parsley (½ cup raw or ¼ cup cooked)
- Spinach
- Turnip greens

Foods High in Vitamin K
You can eat up to 3 cups raw or 1½ cups cooked total per day:

- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage (sauerkraut, coleslaw)
- Endive lettuce
- Okra
- Romaine lettuce
- Scallions

If you greatly increase or decrease foods very high or high in Vitamin K in your diet, let your health care provider know right away.

Cranberries
Moderate amounts of cranberry products are fine such as a glass of cranberry juice a day. Avoid eating or drinking large amounts of cranberries, cranberry juice and cranberry supplements while taking warfarin.

Alcohol
Drinking alcohol is not recommended with this medicine. You should talk to your health care provider if you plan to drink alcohol because more than 1 or 2 drinks a day can change the way your body uses the medicine.
**Dietary and Herbal Supplements**

Use of herbs in cooking, such as garlic and ginger, are safe to eat while you are on warfarin. However, taking herbal supplements like those in pill or tablet forms may cause problems with warfarin. These products may affect how your body uses warfarin:

- Coenzyme Q10
- Garlic
- Ginger
- Ginkgo biloba
- Ginseng
- St. John’s wort

Some vitamin and mineral supplements in large doses can also affect your body’s response to warfarin such as large amounts of vitamins A and E. It is safe to take an adult multivitamin each day that contains vitamin K, but do not also take Viactiv calcium supplements as Viactiv also has extra vitamin K.

**Always tell your health care provider if you are starting, taking, or changing any herbal supplements, herbal teas or dietary supplements.**

**Liquid Nutritional Supplements**

Liquid nutritional drinks like Ensure, Boost and Glucerna have a low amount of vitamin K added to 8-ounce bottles. If you drink several of these bottles each day, your vitamin K level may increase and require your warfarin dose to be changed.

If you use these nutritional drinks, tell your health care provider that you are taking them since it may affect your warfarin dose.

**Remember to tell your health care provider 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 any questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.