



## **COUMADIN® (Warfarin) Patient Instruction Sheet**

### The Do's and Don'ts

Coumadin® is an oral anticoagulant. It is a medication that will help thin your blood in order to prevent clots from forming in your blood vessels. It is very important to maintain an adequate level of Coumadin® in your blood. If the level of Coumadin® is too low, your blood may clot in your blood vessels. If the level of Coumadin® is too high, bleeding may occur.

### DO

- ✓ Take Coumadin® at the same time every day or as recommended by your doctor or nurse. It is usually taken in the early evening or at bedtime. You may take it with or without food. If you forgot to take your medication and remember it on the same day, take the dose as soon as you remember it.
- ✓ Keep your appointments for your blood tests. These blood tests are important to help your doctor adjust the dose of your medication that is best suited to you. You may eat the day of your blood test; you do not have to fast before these tests.
- ✓ Maintain a normal eating pattern.
- ✓ Call your doctor's or nurse's office if they did not contact you after you had your blood test. Once a stable dosage has been determined, you should have a blood test every 1 to 4 weeks.
- ✓ Keep a record of the test results and your daily dose of Coumadin®.
- ✓ Tell every doctor, dentist or pharmacist that you see during your treatment that you are taking Coumadin®. If you have a calendar outlining the dosage and blood tests, bring it with you when you see these health care providers.
- ✓ Wear an identification bracelet such as a MedicAlert® bracelet that states that you are on Coumadin® or carry a card with this information.
- ✓ Avoid injuries that can cause you to bleed:
  - Use a soft bristled toothbrush to prevent your gums from bleeding.
  - Use an electric razor instead of a razor blade to avoid cutting yourself.
  - Be careful when you handle any sharp instruments such as kitchen knives.
- ✓ Exercise regularly. However, talk to your doctor or nurse about what exercises you can do that are not a risk to yourself while you are on this medication.
- ✓ Notify your healthcare provider if you are pregnant or if you are planning on becoming pregnant. Coumadin® should not be taken during pregnancy.

## DON'T

- ✓ Miss your blood test and clinic appointments. Notify your doctor or nurse as soon as you know if you are unable to keep an appointment.
- ✓ Double your dose or make up for missed doses. If you forget to take your medication the next day, do not take the missed dose. Instead, carry on with your regular dose as scheduled. If you forget for more than 2 days, inform your doctor immediately.
- ✓ Drink alcohol. Check with your doctor if you have a small amount of alcohol (1-2 drinks) on occasion. Alcohol can increase the chances of bleeding.
- ✓ Change your eating habits without first consulting your doctor, nurse, or dietician.
- ✓ Eat green raw vegetables in very large quantities such as brussels sprouts, cauliflower, spinach, Kale, broccoli, collards, parsley, cabbage, etc. Consult your dietician or nurse.
- ✓ Take any food supplements, vitamins or over the counter medications without first checking with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- ✓ Blow your nose with too much force. You can cause a nosebleed.
- ✓ Play any contact sports or other activities where injuries are likely to occur.
- ✓ Stop taking your Coumadin® unless your nurse or doctor tells you to.

Notify your Healthcare Provider for any of the following side effects of this medication:

- ✓ Severe and prolonged headaches.
- ✓ Dizziness.
- ✓ Urine that is pink, red or brown in color.
- ✓ Weakness.
- ✓ Bleeding that does not stop.
- ✓ Vomiting red blood or material that looks like coffee grounds.
- ✓ Stools that are loose and red or black in color.
- ✓ Nose bleeds.
- ✓ Bruises, bleeding or swelling without any obvious reason.
- ✓ Severe pains anywhere on your body.
- ✓ Unusual vaginal bleeding or longer during menstruation.

If you cannot reach your doctor or nurse, go to the emergency room if you have any of the symptoms above.

**FOLLOW-UP:** It is important to keep your appointments for your blood tests.

If you have any questions or concerns, call \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

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