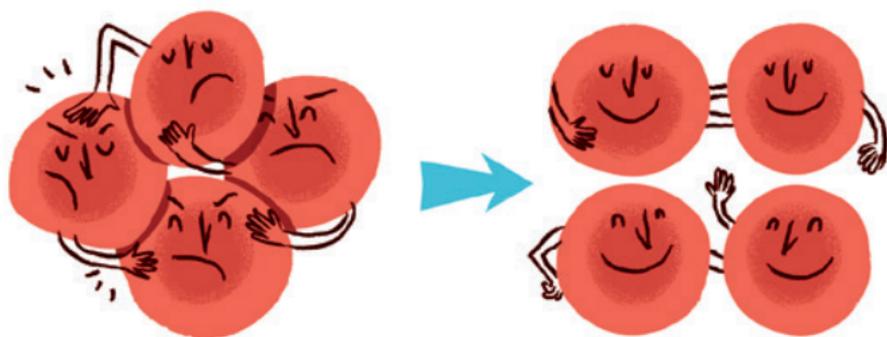


My pharmacist and me

MONITORING MY ANTICOAGULATION TREATMENT



WITH YOUR PHARMACIST'S HELP, YOUR TREATMENT IS EASIER THAN EVER

L'Association québécoise des pharmaciens propriétaires and its members are well aware of the challenge that faces you: enjoying life to its fullest while undergoing anticoagulation treatment.

That is why your pharmacist is offering to help you manage all aspects of your treatment, in the pharmacy, working closely with your doctor.



PHARMACY MONITORING: YOUR ADVANTAGES

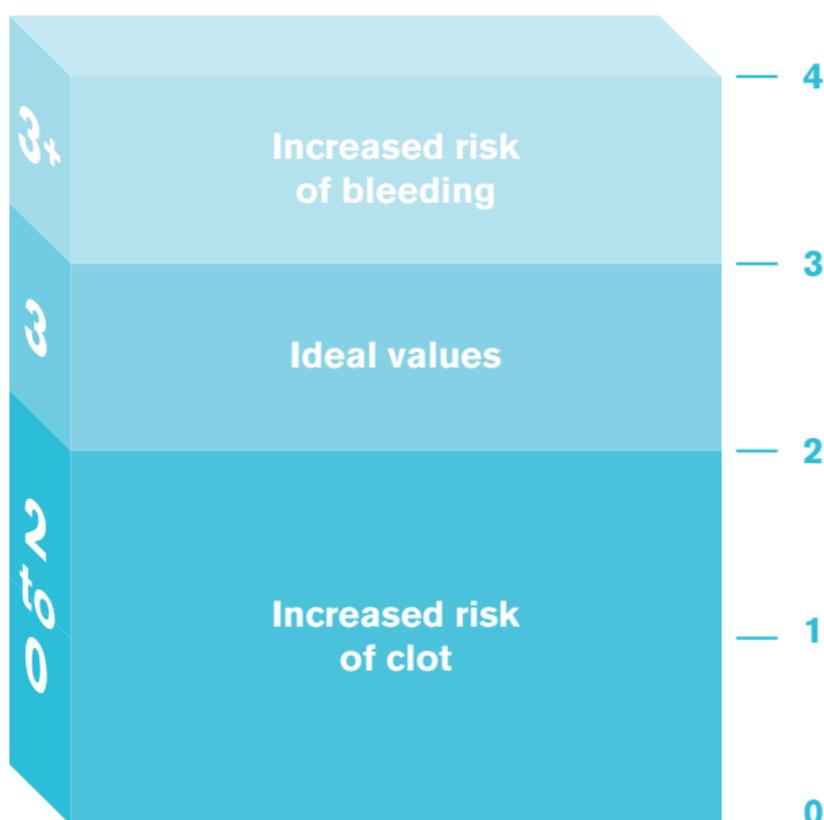
- ▶ You obtain your INR test results faster.
- ▶ Your medication dose is adjusted on the spot
- ▶ You avoid the wait in clinics and hospitals
- ▶ You benefit from professional support tailored to your needs
- ▶ All your questions are easily answered
- ▶ You know immediately what to do in case of emergency

THE MEDICINE YOUR DOCTOR PRESCRIBES

Your doctor has probably prescribed warfarin, an anticoagulant that prevents dangerous blood clots from forming. Coumadin^{MD} is its most common commercial form.

In the beginning of your treatment, your doctor will determine the correct dose for your needs. Afterwards, to verify if the treatment is working well, your blood will be analyzed by a test known as INR (International Normalized Ratio).

The INR test measures your blood's clotting ability, or the rate at which your blood coagulates. To better protect you, your doctor recommends that you attain a value between 2 or 3, or between 2.5 and 3.5, depending on the illness being treated. If you are over these values, you run a greater risk of bleeding. Below these values, the risk of blood clots increases.



YOUR PHARMACIST, YOUR ALLY IN MONITORING YOUR TREATMENT

Besides Coumadin^{MD}, several factors can influence the INR value. For this reason, you should have your blood tested regularly so that your dose may be adjusted to obtain the safest INR values. Your pharmacist is a health specialist in medicines; this is why your doctor entrusts him with monitoring your anticoagulation treatment.



YOUR STRENGTH: THE COMPLICITY AND AVAILABILITY OF YOUR PHARMACIST

Good news for your treatment's success: two health professionals, your doctor and your pharmacist, are taking care of you. Working closely, they will adopt the best strategy to help you attain your health objectives.



**THE AVAILABILITY AND EASE
OF CONSULTATION WITH
YOUR PHARMACIST WILL
SIMPLIFY YOUR TREATMENT
WHILE SAVING YOU TIME.**

MONITORING BY YOUR PHARMACIST, A RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST

MY FIRST MEETING IN PRIVATE CONSULTATION

Your doctor has prescribed warfarin and entrusted your treatment to your pharmacist. In your prescription, your doctor has indicated your treatment goal and the test results that he is hoping to attain.

In the beginning of your treatment, the pharmacist must know your current blood INR. If he has not received this information from your doctor, he will do the INR test.

At the first evaluation meeting with your pharmacist, he will ask you several questions to obtain all the information essential to the success of your treatment:

- ▶ Your allergies or intolerance to certain medications, foods or other products.
- ▶ The list of medications you are now taking (prescribed or over-the-counter drugs and natural products).
- ▶ Potential obstacles to treatment, such as diet, or other health problems.
- ▶ Your lifestyle to determine the appropriate timing of the medication.
- ▶ Your understanding of the illness, the treatment and the medicine.



AS A VERITABLE SPECIALIST IN MEDICINES, YOUR PHARMACIST WILL OF COURSE COUNSEL YOU ON HOW TO USE THE MEDICINE WELL. DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK HIM ALL YOUR QUESTIONS.

THE STEPS OF YOUR MONITORING

In the beginning of the treatment, you will meet more frequently with your pharmacist. In fact, your blood must be tested more often until your INR is in the perfect zone. As soon as your condition stabilizes, your meetings will be spaced.

- ▶ Following results, your pharmacist may modify the dose of your medicine.
- ▶ If the pharmacist judges it necessary to adjust your medicine to obtain your doctor's prescribed goal, he will contact you.
- ▶ He will check your health and ensure that there are no specific factors that could affect the outcome of your test
- ▶ He will develop a schedule for you to take your medication.
- ▶ He will set the next appointment with you and answer all your questions.
- ▶ If necessary, he will organize your pillbox and help you use your treatment diary.

This procedure will continue until your INR test results are in the ideal range. At all times, your pharmacist can help you cope with your treatment.

YOUR ANTICOAGULATION TREATMENT

FOODS AND PRODUCTS TO WATCH

Remember that certain foods and products can modify the effect of warfarin. Learn to recognize the main ones, and when in doubt, do not hesitate to call your pharmacist.

VITAMIN K IN GREEN VEGETABLES

- ▶ You can eat green vegetables: broccoli, Brussels sprouts, spinach, asparagus, avocados, watercress, lettuce, etc. They are excellent for your health. It is important to eat them in regular portions and to avoid large variations in amounts.
- ▶ If you change the amount of green vegetables that you eat, tell your pharmacist, who will adjust your dose of warfarin.

CRANBERRY JUICE

- ▶ Cranberry juice may raise the INR.
- ▶ Avoid drinking it.



VIGICARD

MY DOCTOR

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TELEPHONE

MY PHARMACIST

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TELEPHONE

ALCOHOL

- ▶ Consistency and moderation are essential. Do not exceed 1 (for a woman) or 2 (for a man) glasses a day. This amount represents 148 ml (5 oz.) of wine, 355 ml (12 oz.) of beer or 45 ml (2 oz.) of hard alcohol.

OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS

- ▶ Warfarin's effect can vary considerably if it is combined with certain products, even non-prescription drugs.
- ▶ Before taking any medication, even if you bought it at another pharmacy, talk to your pharmacist about it.

- ▶ Avoid:

Aspirin (unless prescribed by your doctor): it exists in various forms and concentrations (pain medicines, products against colds and flu, certain analgesic creams for muscular aches, etc.)

Ibuprofen: it can increase the risk of bleeding.

Anti-inflammatories.

UPPLEMENTS AND VITAMINS

- ▶ There are more than 50 natural supplements that can interact with warfarin: St. John's wort, licorice, garlic, ginkgo biloba, ginseng, coenzyme Q10, danshen, etc.
- ▶ Inform your pharmacist without fail if you take natural supplements and consult with him before taking any new product, even vitamins.
- ▶ Vitamin E: Do not exceed 400 units per day.
- ▶ Vitamin C: Do not exceed 500 mg per day.

SIDE EFFECTS

Warfarin may have side effects that affect your everyday activities. But they are rare. These are the most likely to occur and what you can do to remedy them.

ANY HEAVY OR LASTING BLEEDING

If you have bleeding that you think is significant and heavy that does not stop after 15 minutes, go to the emergency room. Remember to tell them that you are taking anticoagulants.

BLEEDING FROM THE NOSE OR GUMS

Persons with a health condition requiring anticoagulation treatment often notice longer or more abundant bleeding in certain circumstances.

The best way to stop a nose bleed is to apply pressure to the nostrils, at the base of the nose bone, and to keep the head tilted forward for 5 to 10 minutes. If the bleeding continues, go to the emergency room.

Bleeding of the gums is frequently caused by brushing too hard or badly fitting dentures. Use a brush with soft bristles and wet it under warm water to keep it supple. Brush gently. If your dentures hurt you, see your dentist or dental surgeon.

HEAVIER MENSTRUAL PERIODS

If the abundance of your menstruation becomes a problem, talk it over with your doctor.

BLOOD IN THE URINE

If you notice blood in your urine or stools, do not be alarmed, but consult your doctor promptly.

SPONTANEOUS BRUISING

If you have bruises (black and blue marks) without having received a blow, consult your doctor or pharmacist.

YOU CUT YOURSELF?

If you cut yourself, you will probably bleed longer than usual. Do not be alarmed. Apply pressure to your injury for 5 to 10 minutes.

YOUR SKIN CHANGES COLOR

If you notice a significant change in the color of your skin or your toes, consult your doctor promptly.

CONSULT A DOCTOR (EMERGENCY ROOM OR CLINIC) IMMEDIATELY IN CASE OF:

- ▶ Unexplained abdominal pain
- ▶ Blood in the stools
- ▶ Black stools
- ▶ Brownish vomiting
- ▶ A wound that does not bleed
- ▶ Head trauma
- ▶ Severe muscle contusion

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RECOMMENDATIONS

USE A TREATMENT DIARY

Because it can change frequently, it may be difficult to remember the exact dose of warfarin to take each day. Ask your pharmacist for a treatment diary, that is a little calendar where you can write down the dose whenever the pharmacist calls you after a blood test. As soon as you take the medicine, cross out the dose to confirm that you have taken it.

Be vigilant: the pharmacist may indicate the dose in milligrams (mg), or number of tablets. Make sure you understand the dose that you must take. Don't hesitate to verify this with your pharmacist if needed.

Wear a MedicAlert bracelet or keep a list with you of medicines you are currently taking.

REGULATE THE TIME YOU TAKE YOUR MEDICINE

Take your medicine every day at the same time, preferably with dinner or at bedtime.

DID YOU FORGET TO TAKE YOUR DOSE?

If you remember the same day, take your medicine as soon as you realize you have forgotten it.

If you remember it the next day, take $\frac{1}{2}$ of your previous day's dose as soon as possible. Then take your prescribed dose for that day at the usual time. Register the missed dose in your treatment diary.

LIMIT YOUR RISK OF INJURY

Avoid contact sports and activities where there is risk of injury. Be careful when handling sharp objects.