

Checklist for Educator

1. Background on Warfarin:

- Generic vs. brand name warfarin (Marevan preferred in New Zealand)
- Purpose of warfarin for this patient (e.g. AF, coronary occlusion, PE, DVT?)
- Anticipated length of treatment
- Mechanism of action ("helps to prevent blood clots forming")
- Monitoring of warfarin therapy (incl. importance of blood tests, explanation of INR)

2. Female of child-bearing age?

- Importance of avoiding pregnancy while on warfarin

3. How to take Warfarin:

- When to take warfarin (6pm recommended)
- Ways to help remember to take warfarin (e.g. calendar or red anticoagulant book)
- What to do in the event of missed doses

4. Potential adverse effects and action to take:

- Abnormal bleeding (e.g. nose bleeds, gum bleeds, blood in urine or stools, black tarry stools, excessive bruising,
- Haemorrhage (e.g. severe stomach pain and SOB, headache or other pain, unexplained swelling
- Other rare reactions (e.g. skin rash, "purple toes" syndrome (onset 3 – 10 weeks)

5. Influence of other medications (including non-prescription and herbal)

- OTC (e.g. NSAIDs, aspirin) and herbal preparations
- Medicines for pain (paracetamol preferred)
- Starting / stopping / increasing / decreasing doses of prescription medicines

6. Visiting the dentist/doctor/pharmacy

- Inform dentist of warfarin prior to appointments
- Inform all doctors and pharmacists you visit

7. Influence of diet and alcohol

- Keep daily diet as consistent as possible. Eat a balanced diet including some leafy green vegetables. Avoid foods that are high in fat. Major dietary changes can affect the INR
- Alcohol (1-2 drinks per day unlikely to affect warfarin)

8. Other issues:

- Avoid contact sports or activities where there is a high risk of injury
- Always keep a sufficient supply on hand (especially if travelling overseas)
- Keep out of reach of children (child safety caps)
- Medic Alert bracelet if long-term use (application form available)