

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2020

What medicines can I take if I have aches & pains, a cold, headache or a fever?

Paracetamol is the safest medicine to take when you are taking warfarin or acenocoumarol and have aches & pains, a cold, headache or a fever, flu or corona virus.

It is usually as good as more complicated cold and flu remedy products.

If you need to take paracetamol for more than four days, or you need to take the maximum dose for more than two days, please phone us so we can check your INR.

Remember to try to drink plenty of fluids and eat regularly, even if it is smaller meals or snacks than usual.

Please DO NOT take Aspirin or Ibuprofen tablets.

Aspirin & Ibuprofen can raise your INR and cause gastrointestinal (stomach) bleeding, which is dangerous if you are on warfarin or acenocoumarol.

If you are buying 'Cold & Flu' remedies – please check the ingredients first before buying them. Many contain Aspirin or Ibuprofen. A number of our patients have taken Beechams Powders® by mistake, which contain aspirin.

You can buy Gels/Creams containing Ibuprofen-like medicines to rub onto painful joints.

Most people, but not everyone, can use these Gels or Creams while on warfarin or acenocoumarol: there is less risk of stomach bleeding than with tablets, but enough medicine is absorbed that your INR is usually still affected. Please phone us straight away for advice and to arrange an INR check.



What can I take for a cough or sore throat?

Throat lozenges like Strepsils® and Locketts® are safe to take with warfarin.

Cough syrups often don't work but simple ones like glycerine, honey and lemon linctus, or simple linctus are safe to take. If you are diabetic, ask your pharmacist for a sugar-free cough syrup.

Tell us STRAIGHT AWAY (or ask family or friends to tell us) if you:

- Have symptoms that might be Corona Virus, or
- Are Self-Isolating because you have been in contact with someone else who has Corona Virus, or
- Have not been eating (or are suddenly eating or drinking much less than usual) for 2 days or more, or
- Have a high temperature or fever for 2 days or more, or
- Have had diarrhoea, vomiting, or both for 2 days or more.

If you let us know that you are ill, we can give you tailored dose advice while you are unwell to try to keep your INR at a safe level.



Please have your Flu jab

Flu makes people very unwell very quickly, and often causes a rapid and dangerous rise to your warfarin level.

The flu jab prevents a lot of cases of flu and only rarely causes a rapid increase of your warfarin or acenocoumarol level (INR).

There is no need to have your INR checked after your flu jab unless your INR has risen following a flu jab in previous years.



Please let us know if you have any Anticoagulant Review Appointments with your GP, Pharmacist or Consultant – so that we can keep our records up to date.

NEVER USE miconazole oral gel (DAKTARIN®) with warfarin
It causes your INR to **rapidly** rise.



We have seen people with bleeds, and people who have needed hospital admission, as a result of using miconazole gel and warfarin together.

Why do I need to go to A&E if I bang my head?

A bang to the head can sometimes cause damage to the blood vessels inside or close to the brain, causing bleeding into the brain.

Bleeding inside the brain will cause a stroke.

For someone taking an anticoagulant (such as warfarin or, acenocoumarol) if a bleed in the brain does occur, they will bleed more and for longer than someone who is not taking an anticoagulant.

Symptoms of bleeding in the brain may not develop for some hours, or even days, after a knock to the head. In rare cases, symptoms from a slow bleed can develop even weeks after a head injury.

If you suffer a head injury, you must attend A&E and tell them that you take an anticoagulant.

For more information on Head Injuries, see <https://patient.info/brain-nerves/head-injuries>

Can I drink alcohol?

We want warfarin to fit in with your life.

So, if you enjoy alcohol we'd like to help you to do this safely.

For many people, their usual alcohol routine has changed this year because of the lifestyle impact of lockdown restrictions.

Your usual warfarin (or acenocoumarol) dose takes account of your normal alcohol routine.

If you have drunk more alcohol than is usual for you, or if you usually drink alcohol but have now stopped drinking, please tell us so that we can manage your warfarin level safely.

Moderate alcohol intake of up to 2 units a day, will normally have little effect on your warfarin level (INR).

Binge drinking (e.g. a bottle of wine / 3 pints or more) is dangerous and can place you at serious risk of both bleeding and of falls & head injury – the consequences can be lethal.

1 pint of 4% ale	→	2.3 units
1 pint of 5.4% lager	→	3 units
1 pint of 6% cider	→	3.4 units
1 small (175ml) glass of wine	→	2.3 units
1 large (250ml) glass of wine	→	3.3 units
1 bottle of 12% wine	→	10 units
1 double gin and tonic	→	2 units
1 double vodka	→	2 units

REMEMBER...always let us know if...

... you are ill for more than 2 days, especially if you are unable to eat, are eating much less than usual, or have a fever, sickness or diarrhoea...

... you start a new medicine, especially antibiotics, steroids, or miconazole oral gel...

... you stop a medicine or the dose is changed...

... you have any light bleeding or an area of large bruising with no known cause. If you have heavy bleeding go straight to A&E or call 999...

... if you have a fall. But, if you bang your head please seek medical advice straight away and let them know you take warfarin...

... you are discharged from hospital. This information can take some time to reach us via NHS systems.

... you are having a medical procedure carried out before the next clinic visit...

... you start dieting...

... you have recently reduced or increased your alcohol intake...

... you have missed any doses or may have taken the wrong dose...

Telephone 0191 518 1564

Freephone 0800 681 6518