
Warfarin and Your Diet

What is warfarin?

Warfarin (or Coumadin®) is a medicine that helps “thin” your blood so that it clots more slowly. It does this by reducing blood clotting proteins made with vitamin K in your liver.

What should I eat while taking warfarin?

Because your body uses vitamin K to help your blood clot, you need to watch how much and how often you eat foods high in vitamin K. Changing the amount of vitamin K you eat will change how well the medicine works.

- Eating more foods high in vitamin K than usual can cause blood clots.
- Eating fewer foods high in vitamin K than usual can cause bleeding.

You do NOT need to avoid foods that are high in vitamin K. Instead, you need to eat the same amount of these foods from day to day and week to week. Your registered dietitian can help you make sure you are eating a steady amount of vitamin K.

These foods are **high** in vitamin K.

- Beet greens
- Collard greens
- Kale
- Mustard greens
- Spinach (cooked)
- Swiss chard

These foods are **moderately high** in vitamin K.

- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Coleslaw
- Cucumber
- Dill pickles
- Green onions
- Lettuce
- Parsley
- Spinach (raw)
- Swiss chard (raw)

These nutritional supplements and snack bars are also **moderately high** in vitamin K.

- Boost®
- CLIF® bars
- Ensure®
- Glucerna®
- Nepro®
- SlimFast®

Remember, you can still eat foods that are high in vitamin K. In fact, foods that are high in vitamin K are healthy. Your body uses vitamin K to keep your bones strong as you age. **You just need to eat the same or consistent amount each day.**

If you want to change how often you eat foods high in vitamin K, talk to your health care provider or pharmacist first. They may need to change how much medicine you take.

Can I take supplements while on warfarin?

- Supplements may interfere with warfarin. Always ask your health care provider before you start or stop taking any supplements.
- Do not take vitamin E or fish oil supplements.
- Most multivitamins contain vitamin K, and some brands contain more than others. If you take a multivitamin, take it every day. Do not change brands without telling your health care provider or pharmacist.
- Avoid **all** herbal supplements including alfalfa, arnica, bilberry, bromelains, cat's claw, coenzyme Q10, cranberry, dong quai, feverfew, flaxseed oil, forskolin, garlic, ginger, ginkgo biloba, ginger, ginseng, glucosamine, goldenseal, horse chestnut, inositol hexaphosphate, kava kava, licorice, pau d'arco, red clover, St. John's wort, sweet woodruff, turmeric, wheat grass, and willow bark.
- You can use herbs and spices to flavor your food.

What else do I need to know?

- Avoid alcohol if possible. Alcohol may affect how well the medicine works.
 - If you choose to drink alcohol, limit it to 1-2 drinks per day for men and 1 drink per day for women. One drink is equal to 4 ounces of wine, 1.5 ounces of liquor, or 12 ounces of beer.
 - Do not binge drink while taking warfarin.
- Talk to your health care provider if you change your diet for any reason, such as if you are sick or trying to lose weight. Your provider may need to change how much medicine you take.
- Ask your registered dietitian if you need to limit cranberry juice or cranberry sauce.
- Do not take aspirin or other pain relievers unless your health care provider tells you to use them.
- Tell all your health care providers (including surgeons and dentists) that you are taking warfarin.