

## WHAT TO EAT AND DRINK WHEN YOU ARE ON WARFARIN

Warfarin 'thins' the blood, and increases the time it takes to clot. Changes to your diet, when taking warfarin, can have an effect on the 'thinness' of your blood. Some foods and drinks may make your blood clot too much and others may thin your blood too much.

For good health it is important that you eat a healthy diet and try to follow the tips below. If you wish to change your usual diet, you should discuss this with your doctor as they may wish to arrange for more frequent blood tests (INR tests) to see how thin your blood is.

**Try to be consistent in what you eat and drink.**

### The main points to remember are:

- Eat regular meals
- Avoid losing or gaining a lot of weight or making any major changes to your diet
- If you drink alcohol do not drink more than 3 units per day for a man and 2 units for a women. One unit is equivalent to ½ pint of beer/lager or a single measure (25mls) of a spirit such as vodka, a small glass (125mls) of wine is 1.5 units
- Do not binge drink or get drunk while on warfarin
- Avoid vitamin supplements containing vitamin K – check with your pharmacist if you are unsure
- If you take fish oil supplements do not exceed the recommended dose
- Avoid cranberry juice, cranberry supplements, and grapefruit juice
- Check with your Dietitian or doctor before taking prescribed nutritional supplements – these may contain vitamin K
- If you take any complementary medicines – check with your pharmacist for safety
- If you take weight loss medications (such as orlistat) or the joint supplement glucosamine - check with your pharmacist
- Do not take St John's Wort

Some foods contain a lot of vitamin K, which acts against warfarin to thicken the blood. If you have too much vitamin K you may see your INR levels go too low and could increase your risk of thrombosis (blood clot).

### Top food tips to eat the right amount of vitamin K:

- Most **green, leafy vegetables** contain a lot of vitamin K e.g. cabbage, broccoli, brussels sprouts, spinach, lettuce. If you enjoy eating these, **it is best to have your normal portion every day**. If you don't, then keep to other vegetables such as green beans, peas, carrots, cauliflower, tomatoes, peppers and parsnips.
- If you want to increase the amount of fruit and vegetables you eat, try not to increase the green leafy vegetables – go for more fruit and/or other vegetables.

If your INR levels are unstable, check with your doctor or nurse. They may consider referral to a Dietitian if they think the problem is due to your diet.

**Remember: NEVER stop taking your warfarin without advice from your Doctor or Nurse**

Based on a resource produced by the Therapy Services Partnership East Riding of Yorkshire