

Vitamin K Foods and Warfarin (Coumadin®) Guidelines

Why am I on warfarin?

Your doctor may have put you on a blood thinner drug called warfarin (Coumadin®) to prevent blood clots. Blood clots can cause heart attacks, stroke, and other serious health problems. It is important for you to learn about how the foods you eat can affect this drug.

How does food affect warfarin?

Certain foods, such as dark leafy green veggies, contain vitamin K and can affect how your blood thinner medicine works. It is important to eat a <u>CONSISTENT</u> amount of foods that contain vitamin K, rather than avoiding them.

How does vitamin K affect my INR blood test?

An INR blood test tells your doctor or blood thinner clinic how long it takes your blood to clot and helps them decide how much warfarin you should take.

Making BIG changes in how much vitamin K (see list of vitamin K foods below) you eat can change how warfarin works in your body. Sudden increases in the amount of vitamin K you eat might *decrease* your INR and *lower the effect* of warfarin. However, suddenly lowering the amount of vitamin K in your diet might *increase* the effect of warfarin and *raise* your INR above what your doctor wants. Neither of these are good and this is why a consistent intake of vitamin K is important.

An INR that is too low means the effect of warfarin is low, and you might clot more easily An INR that is too high means the effect of warfarin to high, and you might bleed more easily

How do I keep the amount of vitamin K in my diet consistent?

- ✓ Try to eat the same amounts of vitamin K –containing foods from week to week.
- ✓ Pay attention to serving size. For instance, a cup of cooked spinach has a very large amount of vitamin K compared to a cup of raw spinach because spinach *shrinks* when cooked.
- ✓ Do not make large changes to your diet without first talking to your doctor or blood thinner clinic. For example, if you eat a salad every day, do not all of the sudden stop eating them.

· What else should I know about taking warfarin?

- ✓ Take your warfarin medicine exactly as your doctor or blood thinner clinic told you to.
- ✓ It is important to have your INR tested regularly. Make sure you know when and where to have your blood tested. If you are not sure ask!
- ✓ Diet and medicines can affect your INR blood level.
- ✓ Do not start or stop any medicine, including over-the-counter medicine, vitamins, or herbal supplements without first talking with your doctor or pharmacist.

What are some common foods that contain vitamin K?

Examples of Foods that Contain Vitamin K		
Serving size: 1 cup unless otherwise noted		
MODERATE	HIGH	VERY HIGH
(50-99mcg)	(100-400mcg)	(401-1800mcg)
Black – eyed peas (cooked)	Broccoli (cooked)	Beet greens (cooked)
Broccoli (raw)	Brussels sprouts (cooked)	Collard greens (cooked)
Canola oil (6 Tablespoonsful)	Cabbage (cooked)	Kale (cooked)
Coleslaw	Endive (raw)	Mustard greens (cooked)
Lettuce – iceberg, green leaf,	Lettuce - butterhead, red leaf (raw)	Seaweed (3.5 oz.; dried)
romaine (raw)	Parsley (10 sprigs; raw)	Spinach (cooked)
Okra (cooked)	Scallions (raw)	Turnip greens (cooked)
Plums/prunes dried, stewed	Spinach (raw)	Dandelion greens (cooked)
Rhubarb (frozen)	Soybean oil (8 Tablespoonsful)	

• Where can I get more information about foods that contain vitamin K?

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a website that lists the vitamin K content of many foods.

https://www.ars.usda.gov/SP2UserFiles/Place/12354500/Data/SR25/nutrlist/sr25w430.pdf

References: USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 25 2012

Bowes & Church's Food Values of Portions Commonly Used, 17th Ed. By Jean A.T. Penninigton 1998

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