

Selected Assessment for Newly Anticoagulated Patients

Assess patient's level of knowledge about anticoagulation

- What do you know about the reason you are taking an anticoagulant (“blood thinner”)?
- What do you know about warfarin/Coumadin® or what have you been told?
- How often are you supposed to take your anticoagulant and in what dose or what color pill?
- What worries do you have about taking your anticoagulant? What are you most worried about?

Assess patient history

- Monitor patient adherence and INR more frequently when patient has history of bleeding or clotting.
- Use Fondaparinux or Arixtra rather than low molecular weight heparin if patient is allergic to heparin products.

Women of child-bearing age

- Recommend alternative to hormonal birth control AND alternatives to warfarin if pregnancy is desired.
- Be aware that heavy periods or menorrhagia can worsen with anticoagulation.

Assess factors that influence adherence

- What insurance coverage do you have for medications and INR monitoring? What difficulty do you have paying for it?
- What time of day works best for you to take your anticoagulant? What is your best day for INR testing?
- How will you get to your appointments?
- What is the best way to tell you your INR results? (phone, fax voice mail, text, e-mail, etc.)
- What strategies helped you in the past to remember to take medication or to cope with feeling upset?

Assess factors that influence INR

- How many alcoholic drinks do you drink each day?
- What other medications (including OTC) do you take?
- What are your favorite foods? What vegetables do you eat regularly? How often do you change what you eat?

Assess factors that increase bleeding risk

- What activities or sports do you enjoy doing?
- Do you use a helmet? Do you use safety equipment? Do you use a seat belt?
- What changes have you made at home to prevent falls?