

ANTICOAGULATION MEDICATION

Millions of people take medication to prevent dangerous blood clots. These medications are called anticoagulants, but they are commonly called “blood thinners.” **Some of the most common reasons people are prescribed anticoagulation medication include:**

ATRIAL FIBRILLATION

People diagnosed with atrial fibrillation or an irregular heartbeat may be prescribed an anticoagulant to prevent clot-provoked stroke.

RISK FOR BLOOD CLOTS IN LEGS OR LUNGS

People at increased risk for dangerous blood clots in the legs or lungs may be prescribed an anticoagulant to prevent life-threatening blood clots like these.

IMPORTANT BALANCE OF CLOTTING & BLEEDING RISKS

When used properly, anticoagulation medications can safely and effectively prevent blood clots. As with all prescription medications, they also can cause side effects. **The most common side effect or complication of all anticoagulation medications is bleeding.**

Bleeding risks with anticoagulation therapy can be minor,

such as when you nick yourself while shaving, scrape your knee, or undergo a dental cleaning or procedure like a tooth extraction.

Bleeding risks with anticoagulation therapy can be major or life threatening,

such as internal bleeding that can occur if you have an accident, serious injury, or major surgery.

Effective anticoagulation management requires the successful balance between the prevention of blood clotting and the potential risk of bleeding that is a complication of all anticoagulation therapies.

You should always talk to your doctor or healthcare team about your anticoagulation management when you have surgery or any other medical or dental procedure planned.

TAKE THESE FOUR STEPS

1. BEFORE YOUR SURGERY OR MEDICAL OR DENTAL PROCEDURE

Work with your doctor to schedule your medical procedure and make sure your doctor and healthcare team are aware of all of the medications you are taking, as well as your existing risk for blood clots and prescribed anticoagulation treatment.

2. WHEN YOUR SURGERY OR PROCEDURE IS SCHEDULED

Follow all of your doctor’s instructions before and after your surgery or medical procedure. If you do not follow your doctor’s instructions, you run greater risks for bleeding and clotting and your surgery or procedure may need to be postponed.

3. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ANTICOAGULATION MANAGEMENT & WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Everyone is different and you will have different risks. Below are the general guidelines your doctor may follow, depending on the type of medication you take.

Warfarin (Coumadin®)

5 days before procedure: Stop taking
2-3 days before procedure: Bridge with injections of low molecular weight heparin (LMWH)
24hrs before: Stop injections of LMWH

Antiplatelet Aspirin

7-10 days before procedure: Stop taking aspirin

New Direct Oral Anticoagulants

Apixaban (Eliquis®), Edoxaban (Savaysa®), Rivaroxaban (Xarelto®)

2-3 days before procedure: Stop taking medication

Dasigatran (Pradaxa®)

3-5 days before procedure: Stop taking medication

4. AFTER YOUR SURGERY OR PROCEDURE

Follow-up with your doctor for specific instructions to restart anticoagulant medication. This will vary based on your clotting and bleeding risks, the type of anticoagulant you are taking, and the type of procedure that was performed.