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NORTHWEST OHIO CARDIOLOGY CONSULTANTS

DO's and DON'Ts of ANTICOAGULANT THERAPY

A handy teaching guide for patients who need to take an anticoagulant to prevent blood clots.

Your doctor has prescribed the anticoagulant drug warfarin (Coumadin) to reduce your blood's ability to clot. This guide offers tips on what to do and what not to do while you are taking this drug. You will use it along with other special instructions your nurse or doctor has given you.

DO's

Use an electric razor to shave or a depilatory to remove unwanted hair.

Wear gloves while gardening.

Use a soft-bristled toothbrush.

Place a rubber mat and safety rails in your bathtub to prevent falls.

Avoid sharp objects and contact sports.

Carry medical alert identification stating that you are taking an anticoagulant.

Keep all appointments for blood tests. These tests are used by your doctor to regulate your dosage.

Refill your prescription at least 1 week before your supply runs out.

Take your medication at the same time each day as prescribed. Change your dosage only as directed by your physician.

Store your medication away from extreme heat or cold.

Make sure your daily intake of foods high in vitamin K remains stable.

Report abdominal or joint pain or swelling to your physician.

Draw a line around the margins of new bruises with a watersoluble marker. If the bruises extend outside the line, notify your physician.

Maintain pressure on all cuts for 10 minutes. If you cut your arm or leg, also elevate it above heart level. If the bleeding does not stop, call for help. Then call your physician immediately.

Check your urine and stool for any signs of blood.

Notify your doctor of bleeding gums or hemorrhoids, nosebleeds, reddish or purplish skin spots, or excessive menstrual flow. Also report vomiting, diarrhea, or fever that lasts longer than 24 hours.

DON'Ts

Avoid taking aspirin, drugs containing aspirin, or any other drug (including non-prescription cough and cold remedies and vitamins) without consulting your physician or pharmacist.

Do not take an extra dose of your anti-coagulants. If you forget to take a dose, just take your next dose at the scheduled time. If you miss two doses, call your physician.

Avoid heavy alcohol consumption. (Alcohol can cause gastrointestinal bleeding.)

Never put toothpicks or sharp objects into your mouth.

Avoid walking barefoot.

Do not trim calluses or corns yourself; instead, consult a podiatrist.

Be extremely cautious in using power tools.

Additional instructions:

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McCord Building • 2940 North McCord Road • Toledo, Ohio 43615 • 419-842-3000
ALL LOCATIONS TOLL FREE: 1-800-243-1912