

## Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System Coumadin Education Handout

### Indications for use:

#### What is Coumadin?

Coumadin or Warfarin is a brand of anticoagulant medication. "Anti" means against and "coagulant" means causing blood clotting. Coumadin controls the way blood clots inside your blood vessels.

#### What is it used for?

- To prevent or treat blood clots after surgery
- To prevent or treat stroke
- To prevent or treat a heart attack
- To prevent blood clots caused by irregular heart beat
- To prevent or treat blood clots in the legs (deep vein thrombosis or DVT)

#### Administration:

Take each Coumadin dose at the same time of day. If you miss a dose, notify your physician right away. Take the missed dose as soon as possible on the same day, but do not take a double dose of Coumadin the next day to make up for the missed dose. Coumadin tablets come in many strengths, and each strength has a unique color:

Tablet Strength	Tablet Color
1 mg	Pink
2 mg	Lavender
2 ½ mg	Green
3 mg	Tan
4 mg	Blue
5 mg	Peach
6 mg	Teal
7 ½ mg	Yellow
10 mg	White

#### Daily activity and exercise:

Check with your doctor before starting any exercise or sports program. Daily activities -- Be careful when using razors. Use an electric razor or hair removing creams to lessen the chance of cuts. Use a soft toothbrush. Brush and floss gently to prevent bleeding from the gums.

#### Precautions:

Pregnancy, surgery and dental work - if you are a woman taking Coumadin and planning to become pregnant, talk with your doctor about the possible risks and ways to reduce those risks. Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant.

Before receiving treatment, tell all of your doctors and dentists you are taking Coumadin.

#### Labs/Monitoring:

**Blood test** - when you start taking Coumadin, you may have Prothrombin (PT)/INR (International Normalized Ratio) tests every day for a few days, then perhaps one time every week. These tests will be needed at periodic intervals throughout your course of therapy to keep your PT/INR in the best range for your medical condition. Call your doctor in 3 days to schedule PT/INR.

#### Food/Drug Interactions:

**Diet and exercise** -- large amounts of foods high in vitamin K may change the way Coumadin works. Limit

foods high in vitamin K to ½ cup, cooked serving or one 3 ounce raw serving per day. Foods rich in vitamin K include green tea, beef liver, soy oil, tofu, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, chick peas, kale, lettuce, turnip greens, seaweed and spinach. Alcoholic beverages can also change the way Coumadin works. Ask your doctor about the amount of alcoholic beverages you may drink. Talk with your doctor if you are planning any major diet changes.

**Medications:** -- Many medications and vitamins can affect how Coumadin works, including:

- Some prescription medications
- Vitamins or herbal supplements
- Non-prescription medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), aspirin, ibuprofen, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS), cold and cough medicines
- Antacids, laxatives or other medications for pain or discomfort
- Do not stop or start any medications without first talking to your doctor

**Signs to report:**

- Feeling tired or looking pale (sign of anemia)
- Bleeding from the nose, gums or ears
- Menstrual bleeding that is heavier or longer than normal
- Reddish or rusty colored urine
- Bowel movements that look bright red, black or tarry
- Vomiting blood (may look like coffee grounds)
- Unusual pain or swelling, especially in the joints
- Coughing up blood
- Stomach or abdominal pain
- Unusual hemorrhoidal bleeding
- Bruises that appear without reason or become swollen; or purplish spots on your skin
- Bleeding from cuts that won't stop after applying pressure for 10 minutes
- Unusual headache

**If you have any of these signs, contact your doctor right away.**