



# Nutrition and Supplement Information

## Warfarin

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This handout lists foods, vitamins, nutrition supplements and herbal products that can affect the way warfarin works and your INR level.

Talk to your health care provider before making any changes to your diet, vitamins, nutrition supplements or herbal products.

### **Why is vitamin K important while taking warfarin?**

Vitamin K is important as it helps your blood clot. This clotting helps to stop serious bleeding when you cut yourself. Vitamin K is also good for your bones and vegetables high in vitamin K are heart healthy. However, an inconsistent amount of vitamin K can affect the way warfarin works and your INR level.

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## Can I eat vegetables high in vitamin K while taking warfarin?

Yes. Certain vegetables such as asparagus, broccoli, brussel sprouts, romaine lettuce and spinach contain vitamin K and can lower your INR. However, if you eat them on a consistent basis, your INR should not change.

This means **eat the same amount of any of the vegetables listed below each day**. For example, do not eat a lot of spinach one day and have no other vegetable from the list the next day.

Eat at least one dark green vegetable every day as part of a healthy diet.

### Vegetables high in vitamin K

- Asparagus
- Beet greens
- Broccoli
- Brussel sprouts
- Cabbage
- Chicory greens
- Collards
- Coriander
- Dandelion greens
- Endive
- Escarole
- Green onions (scallions or spring onions)
- Kale
- Lettuce (except for iceberg)
- Mustard greens
- Parsley
- Radicchio
- Rapini
- Spinach
- Swiss chard
- Turnip green
- Watercress

If you eat more vegetables from the above list only on a seasonal basis, you will need to have your INR checked more often. Your dose of warfarin can be adjusted to avoid risks of bleeding or forming blood clots.

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## What about avocado, cranberry juice and green tea?

These foods and drinks can also affect the way warfarin works and your INR level. You need to keep your intake of these items consistent in your diet.

## Can I take vitamins, nutrition supplements or herbal products while taking warfarin?

If you take any vitamins, nutrition supplements or herbal products, continue to take them on a consistent basis. It is especially important to talk to your health care provider before you **start, change or stop** taking any of the following:

Contain vitamin K	Do not contain vitamin K but may affect how warfarin works
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a multivitamin that has vitamin K</li> <li>• ADEK</li> <li>• a nutrition supplement, such as Ensure® or Boost®</li> <li>• a calcium soft chew such as Viactiv® Calcium Soft Chews Plus Vitamin D and K</li> <li>• vitamin K</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vitamin E</li> <li>• fish oil supplements that contain eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)</li> <li>• Ginkgo biloba</li> <li>• Ginseng – Panax ginseng (also known as Asian ginseng, Chinese ginseng, Japanese ginseng, Korean ginseng) and Panax quinquefolius (also known as American ginseng)</li> <li>• St. John’s Wort – Hypericum perforatum</li> </ul>

Always read the label of a product to see if it contains vitamin K. If you are unsure, ask your health care provider before you take it.

This is not a complete list of herbal products that may interact with warfarin. Just because a herbal product is **natural** does not mean it is safe to take with warfarin.

## What is the most important thing to remember while taking warfarin?

The most important thing to remember while taking warfarin is to keep your diet the same or consistent. If you take any vitamins, nutrition supplements or herbal products continue to take them on a consistent basis.

If you do make changes to the foods and supplements listed in this booklet, the amount of warfarin you take may need to be adjusted.

Your blood work will be checked often while you are taking warfarin to make sure you are taking the right amount.

**Talk to your health care provider before making any changes to your diet, vitamins, nutrition supplements or herbal products.**

## More information...

For more information about warfarin, ask your health care provider for a copy of the Hamilton Health Sciences patient education handout “Medication Information – Warfarin”. You can also get a copy from our website [www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca](http://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca). Click on “Patient Education”.