

# Warfarin & your dental treatment



## Why have I been given this leaflet?

You have been given this leaflet because you are taking an anticoagulant. This medication you are taking can affect your dental treatment.

## What are anticoagulants?

Anticoagulants are medicines that prevent the blood from clotting as quickly as normal. Some people call anticoagulants blood thinners. The blood is not actually made any thinner it just takes longer to clot whilst you are taking anticoagulants

The anticoagulant you are taking helps to prevent harmful blood clots from forming in your blood vessels. Because these drugs work by reducing the formation of blood clots, they can also make you bleed more easily and for longer. This may happen especially if you are having treatment that would normally cause bleeding, such as some dental procedures.

This leaflet explains what you and your dentist can do to reduce the chance of you having any bleeding problems after dental treatment.

## Can I clean my teeth as usual while taking an anticoagulant?

YES, it is important for everyone to maintain good oral hygiene and you should continue to clean your teeth as usual.

Poor oral hygiene can lead to gum disease (periodontal disease) where the gums become swollen and bleed more easily. By taking care of your oral health you can prevent gum disease and also reduce the need for dental treatment that might cause bleeding.

You should still go to your dentist and hygienist as usual when taking an anticoagulant.

## What do I need to do?

It is very important that your dentist knows what medications you are taking and what medical conditions you have. By dentist we also mean your dental hygienist or dental therapist.

- Tell your dentist which anticoagulant you are taking.
- Show your dentist your INR record booklet.
- Tell the dentist about all other medications you are taking, both prescribed and medicines you have bought over the counter at the chemist. It would be helpful to show the dentist all of your prescriptions.
- Aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen and diclofenac can cause you to bleed more.
- You should also tell your dentist about any herbal or complementary medicines you are taking.
- Tell the dentist about any medical conditions that you have, particularly if you have a kidney or liver condition. These conditions can cause you to bleed more.

This information will allow your dentist to decide on the most suitable treatment for you. Your dentist may contact your doctor if they require more information.

## What will my dentist do?

- Your dentist can plan the most suitable dental treatment for you. They will discuss your treatment options with you.
- Your dentist can also take other steps to minimise any bleeding that takes place during your dental treatment.
- Your dentist will need to have the results of your recent INR tests. You may be asked to have a test near the time of your dental treatment.
- In most cases your dentist will be able to carry out your dental treatment as usual and will not advise you to alter your medication.
- Your dentist may only carry out a small amount of treatment to start with, or may spread out your treatment over several visits.
- Your dentist might put some stitches in to help stop any bleeding.
- Your dentist will give you information about what to do after your treatment and who to contact if you have any concerns about post-treatment bleeding.

## As with any anticoagulant there is a risk of bleeds

Seek advice from a pharmacist or clinician if you experience any of the following or similar symptoms: Nose bleeds, blood in urine or poo, bruising anywhere, bleeding gums, heavier than normal periods, bleeding from a wound that won't stop.