



# Anticoagulation UK

## Corona Virus and Self-testing for Warfarin Patients

Due to the COVID 19 situation, hundreds of warfarin patients are getting in touch with ACUK and posting on our Health Unlocked social platform asking if they can self-test and how they can get a monitor.

ACUK does not have any supplies of the hand held monitors and these devices are currently not available on the NHS Tariff and have to be purchased directly from the manufacturer, Roche Diagnostics telephone number 0808 1007666. We strongly suggest you do not purchase from any third party advertising on the internet as its likely the price will be inflated greatly.

We understand the current waiting list is around 4 weeks for a new device and costs around £300. The test strips which are used for each test are available on prescription along with the lancets required for the finger prick sample. However we are aware that some GPs will not prescribe them.

**We strongly advise that you discuss possible self-testing with whoever is providing your INR testing before you purchase a monitor as they will need to support you.**

Anticoagulation clinics across primary, secondary and community care will be considering best ways in which to manage patients who attend clinics for INR testing and, will be looking at the most effective ways in which patients at high risk of COVID 19 and needing INR tests will be best managed. This will include the self-testing options and securing these devices for their patients.

Self-testing is straightforward, however the following criteria needs to be considered by patients/carers:

- Be able to follow the instructions supplied with the device and access any resources on how to set up the device and perform a test as provided by the manufacturer.
- have manual dexterity to be able to obtain a finger prick sample of blood
- be able to read a screen (much like a smart phone) record the INR result and communicate it to their clinic as requested for any dosing adjustments
- test as frequently as advised by the anticoagulation clinic

The clinic should provide details of how and when you should test and advice of your INR reading. They should also be able to provide support where possible around tips on how to take your blood sample but not if you are experiencing a technical problem with the device. You will need to consult the manual provided or call the manufacturers helpline.

Due to these challenging times, some patients may be asked to consider switching from warfarin to one of the Direct Oral Anticoagulants known as Doacs or Noacs. These drugs are Apixaban, Dabigatran, Edoxaban and Rivaroxaban. This suite of drugs is approved by The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) as detailed below.

- All DOACs are licensed for the prevention of atrial fibrillation (AF)-related stroke in people with non-valvular AF, for the treatment and secondary prevention of DVT / PE and for the prevention of DVT / PE post-hip and knee surgery.
- Low dose rivaroxaban is also licensed for acute coronary syndrome and in patients with stable coronary artery disease and symptomatic peripheral arterial disease

**Apixaban, Dabigatran, Edoxaban and Rivaroxaban are not recommended for patients with:**

- Mechanical Heart Valves
- Antiphospholipid syndrome
- Poor renal function

Your healthcare professional will want to ensure that you receive continuity of care at all times. They will consider the best options for their anticoagulated patients and it is important that you can ask questions about the management of your therapy and any changes necessary.

If you are interested in self-testing and have any questions, we have ACUK contacts that we can put you in touch with to share their experience.

You can also watch a video of one patient's experience of self-testing at:

<https://youtu.be/ULwV6MIYPlo>

See links to the NICE guidance on self-testing and the recently updated guidance on venous thromboembolism.

**The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance recommends patient self-testing of INR using CoaguChek monitors for those with prosthetic mechanical valves and for patients with atrial fibrillation (AF).** <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/dg14>.

**Venous thromboembolic diseases: diagnosis, management and thrombophilia testing**  
NICE guideline [NG158] Published date: March 2020 <https://www.nice.org.uk>