



Warfarin Care Patient Guide



Sullivan
Nicolaides
PATHOLOGY

Coumadin® and Marevan®

These tablets are NOT the same

Coumadin® and Marevan® are different brands of warfarin anticoagulants, performing exactly the same function. However, they are formulated differently.

You should remain on the same brand unless you are requested to change by your doctor. Check you are still on the same brand each time you have your prescription filled or when you are discharged from hospital with medications.

The information in this guide is for both brands.

The tablets come in different strengths but, as shown below, the different strengths have separate colours and each colour is a different milligram (mg) dose/strength so they can be distinguished from each other.

To help identify the different strengths, the label and the lid of each bottle match the tablet colour.

To avoid making a dose error, make sure you are taking the correct tablet by checking the colour and the strength.

Coumadin®



Light tan 1mg



Lavender 2mg



Green 5mg

Marevan®



Brown 1mg



Blue 3mg



Pink 5mg

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Welcome

Dear Patient

Welcome to Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology's Warfarin Care program. Your doctor has requested that you join our program. Our aim is to manage your warfarin therapy safely and effectively. This requires close cooperation between you, your doctor, and Warfarin Care.

This booklet contains important information about your warfarin medication and your responsibilities as a patient in our program. Please read the information carefully.

You need to continue to visit your doctor and inform them if:

- you experience any bruising, bleeding, or illness; or
- you make any changes to your medications (including vitamins and herbal medicines).

You also need to inform Warfarin Care Support of any events that may affect your warfarin therapy.

Each time you have a Warfarin Care test, please take the time to fully complete the questionnaire at the bottom of the request form. This questionnaire allows you to communicate directly with our Warfarin Care doctor.

We recommend that you keep a record of your dose instructions. The tables at the end of this booklet have been provided for your use, with one line for each week. We suggest you keep this as a long-term personal record of your results and doses, and take this booklet with you when you travel.

Once you have read this booklet, the enclosed Patient self-assessment questionnaire will help you to find out how well you have understood the information about warfarin therapy.

If you have any further questions about warfarin, please call Warfarin Care on (07) 3377 8777 or 1300 769 440. Office hours are 8.00am–7.00pm, Monday–Friday (closed weekends and public holidays.)

Yours sincerely

Warfarin Care, Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology

Warfarin Care contact information

Warfarin Care Support

For all enquiries regarding the management of your warfarin therapy, please call:

Brisbane:

(07) 3377 8578

From outside Brisbane:

1300 769 440

Office hours:

Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm

Closed weekends and public holidays.

Dose Information Centre

For your dose instructions, please call:

Brisbane:

(07) 3377 8777

From outside Brisbane:

1300 769 440

Office hours:

Monday to Friday 8.00am to 7.00pm

Saturday 12.00noon to 5.00pm

Closed Sundays and public holidays.

Patient privacy and Warfarin Care

Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology is committed to maintaining patient privacy and confidentiality and has implemented policies consistent with the National *Privacy Principles and the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000 (C'th)*.

By enrolling you in our Warfarin Care program, your referring doctor has asked us to supply your warfarin dose instructions to you directly.

Under SNP's standard privacy protocol, test results are usually released only to the patient in person or to their referring doctor. However, because it is essential that we give you your dose instructions promptly before your next dose, we need to be able to contact you directly by other means. This contact will be by post, by telephone, by email, by SMS, or by fax (e.g. to your pharmacist if you receive your warfarin medication in a prepacked form). In some cases, we will not be able to contact you personally (e.g. if you are ill) and may have to leave your dose instructions with a relative, carer, nurse, or friend.

You will be required to provide your name and date of birth to our Warfarin Care staff when you receive your warfarin dose instructions by telephone. If a relative, carer, nurse, or friend is to receive your dose instructions, they will need to provide your name and date of birth.

Please note that we will regard your initial and continued enrolment in our Warfarin Care program as giving us implied consent to provide your results by post, telephone, email, SMS, or fax, and/or in some cases to provide your dose instructions to a carer or other individual.

If you do not wish to receive your warfarin dose instructions in this way, you will not be eligible to stay enrolled in our Warfarin Care program. If this is the case, please notify Warfarin Care on (07) 3377 8777 (or 1300 769 440 from outside Brisbane).

Note: Warfarin dose instructions are the only test results that patients may receive in this way. All other results must be collected in person per our patient results protocol.

Our Warfarin Care service

What is Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology Warfarin Care?

This is a service provided to doctors whose patients are taking warfarin. Our aim is to manage your warfarin therapy safely and effectively.

The care of one patient episode requires the assistance of collection staff, couriers, administration staff, scientists, doctors, and phone and mail room staff. Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology's Warfarin Care service is provided to our patients when their INR testing is performed by our laboratory. The current Medicare rebate reimbursement is for the INR test only, and does not cover the cost of the continued management of patient doses. An out-of-pocket fee associated with the enrolment may apply.

While you are a patient in our program, you will need to have regular blood tests to ensure your warfarin therapy is effective.

The Warfarin Care relationship

You, your doctor, and Warfarin Care make up a very important partnership. Communication and co-operation among all three parties is critical to the safe and effective management of your warfarin therapy.

Warfarin Care will:

- provide you with support and ongoing education about managing your warfarin therapy
- require you to complete a patient questionnaire each time you have the Warfarin Care test
- forward a report of your test results and dose instructions to your doctor
- forward a report of your dose instructions to your pharmacist if you receive your warfarin medication in a prepacked form
- notify your nursing home and pharmacist in writing of your dose instructions, if required
- consult your own doctor if issues arise that may affect your warfarin therapy
- closely monitor patients scheduled for cardioversion treatment
- perform an ongoing assessment of whether our program is suitable for you.

(If we decide our program is unsuitable for you, we will pass the management of your warfarin therapy back to the doctor who referred you.)

Responsibilities of your doctor

Your referring doctor remains your primary care giver and the Warfarin Care Support service is not a substitute for this general care.

Your doctor needs to:

- Provide a valid Rule 3 exemption referral for INR tests and dosing. Each referral is valid for as many tests as are required over a 6 month period. If you remain in our program for longer than 6 months, we will require another referral from your doctor.
- Provide you with a script for warfarin which must include 1mg tablets in addition to any other dose size.
- Manage very high or low INR results when clinical intervention is required.
- Manage bridging therapy for patients undergoing surgical or dental procedures.
- Manage alternative therapies such as Heparin or Clexane.
- Notify Warfarin Care when therapy is to stop.

Your responsibilities as a patient

It is essential that you understand and accept your responsibilities as a patient in our Warfarin Care program to ensure your Warfarin therapy is managed safely and effectively.

While you are a patient in our program you will need to:

- Have regular blood tests.
- Continue to visit your doctor regularly and inform your doctor if you experience any bruising, bleeding, or illness.
- Discuss with your doctor any changes you have made to your medications or diet (including herbal medicines, vitamins and dietary supplements or weight loss programs).
- Maintain an adequate supply of Warfarin tablets, always including a supply of 1mg tablets.


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- Complete a Warfarin Care patient questionnaire at each and every Warfarin test.
 - Provide us with accurate, up-to-date personal details, including contact phone number that is valid at all times day or night.
 - Take the dose of Warfarin prescribed.
 - Keep a dated record of your Warfarin doses.
 - Notify Warfarin Care if you intend to stop taking Warfarin or if you have missed any doses.
 - Notify Warfarin Care if you are planning or have had a surgical or dental procedure or if you have been discharged from hospital.
 - Advise Warfarin Care if your medications have changed and the dates these medications were started or stopped.

Patient questionnaire

Each time you have a Warfarin Care test, you must fully complete the patient questionnaire at the bottom of your request form (illustrated opposite).

While we recognise that this can be tedious and a repetitive task, it is vitally important that this form is completed fully each time you have your test, as it allows you to communicate significant information directly to our Warfarin Care doctors.

You can help in speeding up this process by bringing a written list of your current medications to each appointment.



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Rule 3 request

PEN HCC

Office use only

LABORATORY COPY

Surname, Given name (including middle initials)

Male Female

Age: / / Date of birth

Your reference

Phone (Home) Phone (Work)

Tests requested

Clinical notes

Fasting

Pregnant

Hormone therapy

LMP: / / Gestational age (weeks)

URGENT! Phone Fax By time: _____

Phone/Fax no _____

Private Schedule Fee Bulk Bill

Vet Affairs no _____

Copy reports to _____

PERSON COLLECTING SPECIMEN(S) TO COMPLETE:
I certify I established the identity of the patient named on this request, collected and immediately labelled the accompanying specimen(s) with the patient's details.

Name: _____

Signature: COLLECTOR DOCTOR

Hospital code: _____ Ward code: _____

HOSPITAL STATUS State the patient's status at the time of service or when the specimen was collected: a private patient in a private hospital a private patient in a recognised hospital

SST	EDTA	CIT	HSA	PIP	TIP	Swab	Frozen	Other
Tube	Vials	Holder	Coat	Slide	Prep			
Staff ID/Location code/Collector type (stamp)								
Pay cat				Con code				
Date collected: / /				Time collected: : :				

REQUESTING DOCTOR'S SIGNATURE AND REQUEST DATE

Requesting Doctor (provider number, surname and initials, address) if Self Determine

Yes No **Are you taking the warfarin dose recommended by SNP? If 'No', what dose are you taking and who prescribed it?**

Yes No **Have you missed any doses in the last week? If 'Yes', list date(s):**

Yes No **Since your last test have you had a recent illness, bleeding, clot, or hospital admission? If 'Yes', please describe:**

Yes No **Do you intend to have a medical procedure (e.g. surgery, dental extraction)? If 'Yes', please describe:**

Date of procedure: / / Expected discharge date: / /

Yes No **Are you planning holidays soon? If 'Yes', please describe:**

Date of departure: / / Expected return date: / /

Please list your current medications:

Medication	Start date	Stopped date	Changed dose and date

Medication changes (include vitamins, supplements, herbal)*

Medication	Start date	Stopped date	Changed dose and date

Patient authority I hereby authorise Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology to obtain from my medical records all clinical information relevant to my warfarin management.

Completed by: Patient Collection staff Agent** details:

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: / /

* **IMPORTANT!** Please also advise your doctor of any clinical or medication changes.

PRIVACY NOTE The information provided will be used to assess any Medicare benefit payable for the services rendered and to facilitate the proper administration of government health programs, and may be used to update enrolment records. Its collection is authorised by provisions of the Health Insurance Act 1973. The information may be disclosed to the Department of Health and Ageing or to a person in the medical practice associated with this claim, or as authorised/required by law. Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology, a subsidiary of Sonic Healthcare Limited APA ABN 24 004 196 909, 14 Gilkirk Ave, Macquarie Park NSW 2113. ITEM 07234 SEPTEMBER 2011

Warfarin results

Patient priority

It is only important to receive dose instructions within 24 hours of your test if the results will have a major impact on your care. For more than half our patients there will be no dose change at the time of testing. However, Warfarin Care does aim to have your dose instructions available for you the day after your blood test at the latest.

Patients are NOT dosed in order of the time of day that they had their test, but in order of clinical importance. Our doctors have decided which patient episodes should take greatest priority and these patients will be dosed first. Do not expect that you will receive your test result the same day even if you are the first patient to have your blood taken in the morning.

How you will receive your dose instructions

Sullivan Nicolaidis Pathology has a variety of ways of communicating with you depending on when your next test is due and whether your dose is to change. These may include telephone, dose letter, internet, or SMS.

Our dose instructions will include your INR results, Warfarin dose (in milligrams per day, in a weekly format) and the date of your next test.

Always write down your dose instructions and next test date when you receive these by telephone. Use the pages provided at the end of this booklet to record all instructions.

Read all dose letters and keep any dose letter until your next test. Always check that the dose letter is for the most recent test before following the dosing instruction.

Test intervals and communication methods

If your next test is required in less than 7 days: We will only phone you. You will **NOT** receive a letter unless we are unable to contact you.

If your next test is required within 7–14 days: If your dose **HAS NOT CHANGED** we will only send you a letter. You will **NOT** receive a phone call.

If your next test is required within 7–14days: If your dose **HAS CHANGED** you will receive a phone call and a letter.

- * Please note that internet and SMS can be used for all test interval options, however, if receipt of your results is not acknowledged within 48 hours, the communication methods above will apply.

You should remain on the same warfarin dose until you receive our dose letter, telephone call, or SMS, or access your results via the internet. If you do not receive our dose letter, phone call, SMS, or cannot access your results via the internet within 4 working days of your blood test, please phone us on (07) 3377 8777 or 1300 769 440 from outside Brisbane for you dose instructions.

In some cases — if you are ill, or we have urgent results, or we are unable to contact you — we may contact your next-of-kin, or a relative, carer, nurse, or friend with your INR, dose instructions, and next test date. If a relative, carer, nurse, or friend is to receive your dose instructions, they will need to provide your name and date of birth. We do this to ensure safe patient care.

If you receive your Warfarin medication in a prepacked form, your dose instructions may be sent to your pharmacist by fax.

Testing on weekends or public holidays

Testing performed on weekends or public holidays is regarded as after-hours testing. All patients who have a Warfarin test after hours, except those patients scheduled by our Warfarin Care doctor, will be charged our private billing fee.

Collection Centres are generally closed on Sundays and public holidays. Not all Collection Centres are opened during the long holiday break at Christmas, New Year and Easter, and opening times may vary from year to year. In the lead up to Christmas Collection Centres display notices about opening hours. As the holidays approach we recommend that you confirm with your preferred Collection Centre when they will be opened.

Procedures and surgery

Many patients have a need for procedures from time to time. These may include dental work, removal of skin lesions, gastroscopy, colonoscopy, cataract surgery, replacement of pacemakers and other major surgery.

It is your responsibility to alert any doctor you visit for treatment that you are taking Warfarin.

Warfarin Care is unable to manage patients who require a narrow target range (i.e. less than one unit) or a specific target before surgery or to manage your warfarin therapy while you are in hospital. During this period, you will need to consult your treating healthcare professional for your dose instructions.

Warfarin Care will not provide INR results to a patient without dose instructions.

We will resume managing your warfarin therapy once your treating health professional has consented or you have been discharged from hospital. Please notify Warfarin Care so that we can resume managing your therapy and arrange your next test date. You may receive a letter reminding you to do this.

What you need to know about warfarin

What is warfarin?

Warfarin is an anticoagulant, or blood-thinning agent, and can only be monitored by a blood test.

Warfarin slows down the clotting process by interfering with the action of vitamin K. This vitamin is required for the production of several blood-clotting factors and is needed for blood-clot formation.

Warfarin is often recommended for the following conditions:

- blood clots, such as deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism
- irregular heart beat (atrial fibrillation)
- heart valve replacement
- other heart problems.

Warfarin has been used for over 50 years; provided it is carefully managed, it is a very effective drug with few side-effects.

What is an INR?

The letters INR stand for International Normalised Ratio. This ratio is calculated from your blood test and is used worldwide exclusively for monitoring patients on oral anticoagulants such as warfarin.

Your INR levels are very important as they help the Warfarin Care doctors maintain the warfarin dose that is suitable for you. Changes in your warfarin dose will change your INR, although these changes may not occur immediately.

What is the aim of your warfarin therapy?

The aim of your warfarin therapy is to maintain your INR within your recommended target range.

Your doctor advises us of the target range which is appropriate for your clinical condition. Your warfarin is most effective and least harmful in this range.

Your warfarin dose will be specific to you because different people require different amounts of warfarin.

Normally there is a settling-in period when you commence warfarin therapy during which more frequent blood tests, and perhaps changes in your dose, may be required. Eventually, most people will have a stable pattern of testing; weekly, fortnightly, or monthly.

Why is my dose different to my friends?

Your warfarin dose will be specific to you because different people require different amounts of warfarin. The same amount of warfarin does not produce the same INR result in all people. It is not important whether your dose is large or small, it only matters what your INR result is.

What should you do if you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy?

If you are planning to become pregnant, it is critical that you discuss your intention with your referring doctor before ceasing your contraception, as warfarin can cause harm to your baby during pregnancy and delivery.

If you become pregnant while on warfarin, please contact your doctor immediately.

What factors can affect your warfarin level?

A variety of factors can affect your warfarin level. They include:

- **Diet:** No special diet exists for (or is required by) people on warfarin. However, a well-balanced and varied diet is essential for everyone to maintain health.

We also recommend that you:

- avoid crash dieting and binge eating, because your warfarin dose will be adjusted to match your current eating pattern and lifestyle.
- stabilise your vitamin K intake—that is, keep your intake of foods with a high vitamin K content relatively constant. Do not remove these foods from your diet, but eat them in small to moderate amounts (half a cup, or two to four tablespoons in a serve). Foods that are highest in vitamin K include leafy green vegetables such as spinach, cabbage, broccoli, parsley, coriander, alfalfa, all soy products, and green tea. Peas and green beans are not included. In some foods, such as coriander, the vitamin K content can increase on cooking.

There are some situations where dietary changes are unavoidable such as:

- illness: nausea and vomiting will affect your normal food and fluid intake and therefore your INR level, so please notify your doctor and Warfarin Care if these occur.
- hospitalisation: you may be on a different diet while you are an inpatient
- travel: you may eat quite a different diet when you are away
- commencing a new diet or eating plan: if you change your diet, such as starting a healthier eating plan to lose weight or using weight-loss meals, including supplements or drinks, it may affect your INR. Please consult with your doctor prior to commencing any of the above.
- **Illness:** If you are ill, we recommend you consult your doctor.
- **Medications:** These include drugs prescribed by your doctor and products you may have bought from a health food store or naturopath. We recommend that you discuss any changes to your medications or health products with your doctor.
- **Environmental factors:** Changes in weather, such as prolonged hot weather, may affect your warfarin level.
- **Alcohol:** Drink alcohol only in moderation. Discuss with your doctor an amount suitable for you. Large changes in alcohol consumption can significantly affect your warfarin level and should be avoided.
- **Lifestyle changes:** Exercise, weight loss or gain, stress, and travel can all affect your warfarin level.

What medications can affect your warfarin level?

A large number of medications prescribed by your doctor, as well as herbal medicines, will interfere with the action of warfarin. Some of these interactions are well known, but others, particularly those involving herbal products, are not. It is best to be cautious and inform your doctor as well as Warfarin Care before you start taking new medications.

Medications that have the potential to affect warfarin include:

- antibiotics

-
- anticonvulsants
 - anti-inflammatories
 - chemotherapy
 - painkillers, including paracetamol and aspirin
 - most herbal medicines
 - some vitamins.

Warfarin is also affected by treatment for:

- arthritis
- gout
- high blood cholesterol
- peptic ulcers.

What can you do to help manage your warfarin therapy?

You should:

- complete the patient questionnaire on the bottom of your request form at each and every warfarin test
- make use of a daily dosette box to help you remember to take your warfarin and to ensure that you are taking the correct dose each day
- take your warfarin dose at approximately the same time each day
- always comply with dose instructions provided by Warfarin Care
- never stop taking warfarin or change the dose unless you have been instructed to do so by the Warfarin Care doctor or your doctor
- never mix brands—always take the same brand of warfarin the whole time you are on warfarin therapy
- never take a double dose of warfarin if you have missed a dose; it is better to miss a dose if you have forgotten to take it
- inform both your doctor and us if you experience any bruising, bleeding, or illness
- inform both your doctor and us if you change your medications (including herbal medicines, vitamins, and dietary supplements)
- inform both your doctor and us of any changes to your lifestyle, such as an increase or decrease in exercise, changes to your diet, alcohol intake, and stress
- alert any health care professional you visit for treatment that you are taking warfarin.

What brands of warfarin are available?

There are two brands of warfarin: Coumadin® and Marevan®.

You should never mix Coumadin and Marevan, because they differ in their formulations. Therefore, it is critical that you always take the same brand of warfarin.

What do I do if I take too much warfarin?

Notify Warfarin Care immediately with the details of the error, ie how much you have taken and on what days. Do not take more warfarin until you have notified Warfarin Care Support. Be prepared to need an earlier test to check your INR.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

If you miss your dose and remember within 2-3 hours of the usual time that you take your warfarin, then it is OK to take that day's dose. If you remember the next day, NEVER take a catch up dose. Make sure you record any missed doses and tell the collection staff at your next visit.

What is prepacked medication, and how can it help me?

Prepackaging of medication is a service offered by some pharmacists. You will need to discuss this service with your doctor. Your doctor can arrange with your pharmacy to provide your medications in prepacked form.

The pharmacist will pack your medication into sealed compartments that correspond to your dosing instructions. There are various types of prepackaging available, including pop, blister, or roll packs. The purpose of these packs is to help you take the correct medication in the correct amount at the correct time.

Warfarin Care supports the use of prepacked medications. You must notify us if you receive your warfarin from your pharmacy in a prepacked form. We will then provide your dose instructions directly to your pharmacy.

The pharmacy may charge for this service, so please ask about the costs involved.

Herbal products and warfarin

Patients often ask us about herbal medicines, vitamins and dietary supplements, and we recognise that many patients seek out these products with a view to optimising their health. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to predict interactions between warfarin and these products, as there is often a lack of information about the herbal products. You should also bear in mind that 'natural' does not necessarily mean 'safe'. Although warfarin and other medications such as aspirin are perceived as drugs, they are simply synthetic derivatives of naturally occurring substances.

We recommend that you seek advice from your doctor and thoroughly research the herbal products yourself.

If you wish to use herbal products, choose products from local, reputable companies whose products list the following information on the package:

- the herb's common and scientific names
- name and address of the manufacturer
- batch and lot number
- expiry date
- dosing guidelines
- potential side-effects and interactions
- details of how quality is assured.

Avoid products containing more than one herb, and look for products with a specified amount of active ingredient. Such products are generally more reliable, effective, and economical.

As a precaution, you should have a warfarin test one week after commencing any herbal medicines, vitamins, or dietary supplements. Side-effects may take two to four weeks to become apparent, so it is important to keep Warfarin Care and your doctor informed of any changes to your medications.

Many of the following products have an effect similar to aspirin and can cause bruising and bleeding. You should avoid:

- *Ginkgo biloba*
- garlic
- danshen (*Salvia miltiorrhiza*)

-
- *Echinacea purpurea*
 - ginger
 - ginseng (*Panax* spp)
 - St John's wort
 - kava kava
 - feverfew
 - devil's claw (*Harpagophytum procumbens*)
 - papaya
 - celery seed oil
 - quinine/cinchona.

Some herbs contain coumarin-like substances and may interact with warfarin. For this reason you should avoid:

- chamomile
- dong quai (*Angelica sinensis*)
- fenugreek
- horse chestnut
- red clover
- sweet clover
- sweet woodruff.

Soy and soy-based products, green tea, herbal teas made with tonka beans, melilot (sweet clover), and woodruff may affect your warfarin levels because of their high vitamin K content.

Coenzyme Q10 is structurally similar to warfarin and has been reported to interfere with warfarin activity.

Bromelain should be avoided, as it may increase the activity of warfarin.

Iron, magnesium, and zinc may bind warfarin and decrease its absorption. We suggest you take your warfarin dose and any products containing iron, magnesium, or zinc at least two hours apart.

Travel instructions

If you are thinking of travelling interstate or overseas, you will need to contact Warfarin Care Support to obtain special instructions about managing your warfarin therapy while you are away.

If you contact us at least one week before departure, we can provide you with a letter to take with you. This letter will contain information about your current warfarin status and history. It does not, however, constitute a pathology referral for any warfarin tests. You will require an original signed pathology request from your doctor for this.

Unfortunately, we may not be able to provide your dose instructions for some of your travel options (refer below), but we will be happy to resume managing your warfarin therapy when you return. You will need to contact Warfarin Care Support when you return to let us know your recent doses and to arrange a date for your next test.

Patients travelling within Australia and attending a Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology Collection Centre.

We can continue to provide your dose instructions if you are planning to travel within Australia and attend a Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology Collection Centre for your warfarin tests. There is no administration fee. However, you must provide us with a valid contact phone number before you travel in case urgent action is required. Check our website for the location of the Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology Collection Centres.

Patients travelling within Australia and NOT attending a Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology Collection Centre.

If you are travelling within Australia but will not be attending a Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology Collection Centre for warfarin tests, Warfarin Care can still provide you with your dose instructions. However, you will be charged an administration fee of \$25 per test.

Alternatively, you can choose to have your doctor manage your warfarin therapy while you are away. If so, you will need to consult your doctor.

If you choose to continue to receive your dose instructions from us while travelling, we ask that you:

- obtain referrals from your doctor for the blood tests
- contact us at least one week before departure, so we can send you a letter detailing your most recent tests, warfarin doses, and travel hints
- provide us with a valid contact phone number (e.g. mobile phone or phone number at your destination) in case urgent action is required (e.g. if your result is out of range and you require medical intervention, we will direct you to visit a local doctor or hospital)
- take your warfarin record book with you to record your dose instructions
- contact us each time you have a test
- record the name and phone number of the pathology provider or hospital where you were tested
- on the day of your test, ask the laboratory or hospital to fax a copy of the test result to us on (07) 3377 8461 (verbal results will not be accepted)
- phone Warfarin Care Support on (07) 3377 8578 to let us know where and when the test was taken, and be ready to answer the following questions:
 - Have you experienced any bruising or bleeding since your last test?
 - Have you had a clot since your last test?
 - Have you been ill or spent any time in hospital since your last test?
 - Are you planning any surgical or dental procedures before your return?
 - Have you made any changes to your medications since your last test?
(It is important to let your doctor know if you answered 'yes' to any of the above questions.)
- Are you taking the warfarin dose recommended by SNP Warfarin Care?
- Have you missed any doses of warfarin in the last seven days?
- phone Warfarin Care for your dose instructions on the day after your test, between 11.00am and 7.00pm.

Please refer to the map detailing Sonic Laboratories on the inside back cover of this booklet.

Travel hints

When travelling, it is advisable to avoid sitting for prolonged periods. Most airlines provide an inflight exercise guide.

When flying, wear loose, comfortable clothing and restrict alcohol and caffeine intake to avoid dehydration.

Inform your doctor of your travel plans so that you can discuss the use of stockings or other medications.

Keep your medication with you at all times—DO NOT put your medications in your checked luggage.

Patients travelling overseas

We cannot provide your dose instructions while you are overseas.

We advise you to consult your own doctor before departure to discuss managing your warfarin therapy while you are away.

General advice about warfarin testing overseas

The following is general advice about testing overseas. You should always consult with your doctor prior to your departure and follow their dose instructions.

International travel will inevitably cause changes to your diet, activity level and your waking and sleeping cycle.

Most international travel from Australia involves significant changes in time zones. After arriving at your destination it may take a few days to settle into the new time zone, meals, and the new pattern of daily life.

Continue to take your warfarin at your usual time. That is, if you take your warfarin at 6.00pm at home, continue to do this at your destination. **DO NOT** attempt to keep taking your dose on Australian time, as this can lead to confusion and missed doses.

For general safety, Warfarin Care recommends you have a warfarin test sometime in the first week unless your doctor advises you otherwise.

Our overseas travel holiday letter will provide you with your recent INR results and doses. Keep this letter with you as it can be helpful if you need to have a warfarin test at your destination.

You should also have a letter from your doctor outlining your clinical history, current medical problems, and all your current medications. Show this letter to any health care professional you consult while you are away.

Immunisations and malaria-prevention medication

If immunisation injections or malaria-prevention medication are required for your destination country, please discuss with your doctor any potential interactions these may have with your warfarin before you have any injections or start taking any medication.

Warfarin testing overseas

Testing through the local public hospital's Emergency Department may be possible, but you may have to wait a long time as routine testing is not an emergency.

In the United Kingdom, United States of America, and Canada, it is usually easier to test through a local GP.

When you phone for an appointment, explain to the receptionist the service you need (i.e, an INR test and warfarin dosing instructions). You may be able to have both the testing and dosing done on the same day; however, as this is not always possible, you may need to make a future appointment.

If you are staying with family or friends, ask them in advance if their own doctor could help you while you are visiting.

Costs

Some overseas countries have a reciprocal arrangement with the Australian government allowing Australian citizens access to free medical care while visiting that country. Check with Medicare prior to your departure to find out if this applies to your destination.

You should enquire what costs are involved when arranging appointments and requesting testing. Testing in Canada and the United States of America can be very expensive.

General warfarin testing guidelines for overseas travellers

Test within 3–5 days if you commence antibiotics.

Test within a week if:

- you change time zones
- you change your dose
- you start any new medications
- you change from Australian manufactured warfarin to an overseas brand.

On your arrival home:

- notify Warfarin Care of your return
- inform us of your recent INR results and doses
- arrange your next test date with us, usually within the first week.

Patient self-assessment questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess how much you know about warfarin, now that you have read the information enclosed in this booklet.

Please circle the correct answer(s).

(There may be more than one correct answer.)

Question 1: Warfarin is monitored by:

- a) a urine test
- b) a blood test
- c) no monitoring is required.

Question 2: Warfarin acts against:

- a) Vitamin D
- b) Vitamin C
- c) Vitamin K.

Question 3: You should take your warfarin:

- a) at any time
- b) at approximately the same time every day
- c) only when you feel like it.

Question 4: You should tell Warfarin Care, as well as your doctor, when you experience:

- a) unexplained bruising, nosebleeds, or bleeding gums
- b) being very hungry or thirsty
- c) blood in your urine
- d) blood in your bowel motions
- e) diarrhoea and/or vomiting
- f) changes to your medication.

Question 5: Large amounts of vitamin K are found in:

- a) potatoes, tomatoes, rice
- b) leafy green vegetables
- c) raw cabbage, broccoli, green tea
- d) chicken, fish, red meat.

Question 6: If you forget to take a dose of warfarin, you should:

- a) take a double dose
- b) miss it, but tell Warfarin Care at your next test.

Please answer True or False to the following questions:

Question 7: An increase in your alcohol intake can be dangerous while you are on warfarin.

True False

Question 8: While on warfarin, it's OK to take aspirin or other anti-inflammatory drugs without a prescription from your doctor.

True False

Question 9: You don't need to alert allied health care professionals in a hospital emergency ward that you are taking warfarin.

True False

Question 10: Women should not attempt to get pregnant while on warfarin.

True False

Answers to the questionnaire can be found below.

Answers to the patient self-assessment questionnaire:

Question 1: b; Question 2: c; Question 3: b; Question 4: a, c, d, e, f;
Question 5: b, c; Question 6: b; Question 7: True; Question 8: False;
Question 9: False; Question 10: True.

If your score is less than four correct answers, we recommend that you contact our Warfarin Care nurse to discuss warfarin further.

Websites of interest

Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology

www.snp.com.au

The Australian Medical Journal

www.mja.com.au

Use full-text search on keyword 'warfarin' to find: '*Warfarin reversal: Consensus guidelines on behalf of the Australasian Society of Thrombosis and Haemostasis*'.

Dial a Dietitian (US website)

www.dialadietitian.org

Provides general information about dietary and herbal interactions with warfarin, and dietary guidelines for people taking warfarin.

Investigators against Thromboembolism

www.inate.org

An educational website for patients with venous thromboembolism such as deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE).

Anticoagulation Forum

www.acforum.org

A useful website for patients travelling overseas; it lists the location of testing clinics.

Note: We have no association with any of these websites except our own. The views expressed on those websites are those of the site authors and are not necessarily the views of Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology Warfarin Care.

Interstate affiliates



State or Territory	Pathology service	Head office	Telephone
New South Wales	Douglass Hanly Moir	North Ryde	(02) 9855 5222
	Barrett & Smith Collection	Emu Plains	(02) 4735 6166
	Southern IML Pathology	Wollongong	(02) 4224 7474
ACT	Capital Pathology	Deakin	(02) 6285 9800
Victoria	Melbourne Pathology	Collingwood	(03) 9287 7700
Tasmania	Hobart Pathology	Hobart	(03) 6223 1955
	Launceston Pathology	Launceston	(03) 6334 3636
	Northwest Pathology	Burnie	(03) 6430 6777
South Australia	Clinipath Laboratories	Kent Town	(08) 8366 2000
Western Australia	Clinipath	West Perth	(08) 9476 5222
	Bunbury Pathology	Bunbury	(08) 9780 0300

Please note: If you test at these pathology locations and Sullivan Nicolaides Warfarin Care provides you with your dose, Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology will charge the \$25 administration fee for each episode.

Warfarin Care Support

For all enquiries regarding the management of your warfarin therapy, please call:

Brisbane:

(07) 3377 8578

From outside Brisbane:

1300 769 440

Office hours:

Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm

Closed weekends and public holidays.

Dose Information Centre

For your dose instructions, please call:

Brisbane:

(07) 3377 8777

From outside Brisbane:

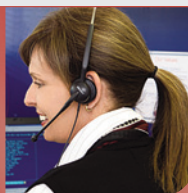
1300 769 440

Office hours:

Monday to Friday 8.00am to 7.00pm

Saturday 12.00noon to 5.00pm

Closed Sundays and public holidays.



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