

# Vitamin K and Warfarin

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## Vitamin K and warfarin

Warfarin (also called Coumadin<sup>®</sup>) is a medicine that prevents blood clots from forming. Your healthcare provider will decide how much warfarin you need based on a blood test called an INR.

Vitamin K helps your body form blood clots. Warfarin works by blocking vitamin K. Big changes in your eating habits can change the amount of vitamin K in your diet and in your blood. This can affect the amount of warfarin you need. For this reason, it is important for you to know the food sources of vitamin K. It is found in many foods, but green leafy vegetables have the highest amounts.

## Do I need to avoid foods that are high in vitamin K?

You don't need to stop eating foods that are high in vitamin K. Instead, you should **try to eat about the same amount of vitamin K every day**. That way, your healthcare provider can know how best to adjust your dose of warfarin.

It's important not to make any sudden or large changes in your eating habits. This could change the amount of vitamin K you usually have in your blood, which will change how much warfarin you need.

Vegetables have higher amounts of vitamin K. Green leafy vegetables usually have the highest amounts.

Foods that are green, but not leafy such as: peas, beans, cucumber, or avocado, are not very high in vitamin K.

Fruit, grain products, milk and alternatives, and meats and alternatives are low in vitamin K.

## How can I keep my vitamin K intake the same every day?

Use the list of high vitamin K food choices below as a guide to help you keep your vitamin K intake the same from day to day. For example, you may plan ahead to eat only 1 or 2 choices daily from the list below. Or, if you normally eat them more often, or in larger amounts, you can continue to do so.

**What's important is to eat the same amount every day.**

### Foods high in vitamin K:

- amaranth leaves, fresh, 1 cup (250 mL)
- asparagus, cooked, ½ cup (125 mL)
- beet greens, boiled, ½ cup (125 mL)
- broccoli, boiled, drained, ½ cup (125 mL)
- Brussels sprouts, cooked, 4 sprouts
- cabbage, raw or boiled, 1 cup (250 mL)
- cilantro (coriander leaf), raw, 1 cup (250 mL)
- collard greens, raw or boiled, ½ cup (125 mL)
- dandelion greens, raw, 1 cup (250 mL)
- endive, raw, 1 cup (250 mL)
- garden or water cress, raw or boiled, ½ cup (125 mL)
- green onion, raw, ½ cup (125 mL)
- kale, raw 1 cup (250 mL) or boiled, ½ cup (125 mL)
- lettuce, romaine, butter, loose-leaf, 1 cup (250 mL)
- mustard greens, raw or boiled, ½ cup (125 mL)
- parsley, fresh, ½ cup (125 mL)
- rapini, raw or boiled, ½ cup (125 mL)
- radicchio, raw, 1 cup (250 mL)
- spinach, boiled, drained, ½ cup (125 mL)
- spinach, raw, 1 cup (250 mL)
- Swiss chard, raw or boiled, ½ cup (125 mL)
- turnip greens, raw or boiled, ½ cup (125 mL)

## Are there other things I eat and drink that can affect warfarin?

Check with your healthcare provider before stopping or starting:

- vitamin supplements
- herbal products or natural health products or supplements
- any nutrition supplements
- fermented soybeans (nattō)

You should also talk to your healthcare provider before changing the amount you normally drink of:

- green tea
- cranberry juice

Tell your healthcare provider if you have a big change in your diet (for example, if you are sick and eating less than normal, or if you are starting a special diet).

Drinking alcohol can increase the effects of warfarin. Drinking too much alcohol can also increase your risk for falling. Both of these effects can put you at risk for bleeding. Speak with your healthcare provider if you plan to drink alcohol while taking warfarin.