

Warfarin and Vitamin K

British Columbia Specific Information

Vitamin K helps make proteins that keeps your bones strong and causes your blood to clot when you are bleeding. You need some vitamin K every day for good health. For information on foods that contain vitamin K, see [Food Sources of Vitamin K](#).

Warfarin, also known as Coumadin, is a blood thinner that helps prevent blood clots or keeps a clot from getting bigger. Vitamin K and Warfarin work against each other in your body. When you are on Warfarin, it is important to keep eating the same amount of vitamin K foods that you usually do, and not suddenly eat a lot more or a lot less. For more information, see [Warfarin and Food: A guide for Patients](#).

If you want to make any changes to your diet, speak to your health care provider about how to do this safely. Your health care provider may need to adjust your Warfarin dose based on your blood work. The International Normalised Ratio (INR) measurement is routine blood work for those on Warfarin. It measures how long it takes to form a blood clot and is used by your health care provider to determine how much Warfarin you should be taking. Always check with your health care provider before making changes in what you eat, or before taking any herbal supplements and other medications (prescription and non-prescription), while taking blood thinners.

You may also call **8-1-1** to speak with a registered nurse, registered dietitian, or a pharmacist. Nurses are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; dietitians are available Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and pharmacists are available every evening from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m. You can also [Email a HealthLinkBC Dietitian](#).

Topic Overview

Warfarin is a pill that you take regularly to help prevent [blood clots](#) or to keep a clot from getting bigger. Coumadin is the common brand name for warfarin.

To ensure that warfarin is effectively thinning your blood, it's important to eat about the same amount of vitamin K every day.

- Vitamin K normally helps your blood clot so wounds don't bleed too much.
- Warfarin works against vitamin K, making your blood clot more slowly.

So warfarin and vitamin K work against each other in your body. That is why, when you take warfarin, it's important that you not suddenly eat a lot more or a lot less vitamin K-rich food than you usually do.

How to get a steady amount of vitamin K

It's up to you how much vitamin K you choose to eat. For example, if you already eat a lot of leafy green vegetables, that's fine. Just keep it about the same amount each day.

And if you take a multivitamin that contains vitamin K, be sure you take it every day.

Check with your doctor before you make big changes in what you eat, such as starting a diet to lose weight.

Adding vitamin K

If you want to start eating more of a food that's rich in vitamin K, talk to your doctor about how to add it safely. Your warfarin dose may need to be adjusted.

Use this list to get an idea of what foods are sources of vitamin K.

Vitamin K content of select foods [footnote1](#)

Food (no salt added)	Amount	Vitamin K (mcg)
Kale, boiled, drained	250 mL (1 cup)	1062
Spinach, frozen, boiled, drained	250 mL (1 cup)	1027
Spinach, boiled, drained	250 mL (1 cup)	889
Collards, boiled, drained	250 mL (1 cup)	773
Broccoli, boiled, drained	250 mL (1 cup)	220
Brussels sprouts, boiled, drained	250 mL (1 cup)	218
Cabbage, boiled, drained	250 mL (1 cup)	163
Spinach egg noodles, cooked, enriched	250 mL (1 cup)	162
Spinach, raw	250 mL (1 cup)	145

Broccoli, raw, chopped	250 mL (1 cup)	92
Lettuce, green leaf, raw	250 mL (1 cup)	46
Coleslaw, fast food	250 mL (1 cup)	135
Okra, boiled, drained	250 mL (1 cup)	64
Green peas, canned, drained	250 mL (1 cup)	63
Lettuce (such as romaine), raw	250 mL (1 cup)	48
Vegetables, mixed, frozen, boiled, drained	250 mL (1 cup)	43
Lettuce, butterhead (such as Boston or Bibb), raw	250 mL (1 cup)	56
Blueberries, frozen, sweetened	250 mL (1 cup)	41
Peas, edible pods, boiled	250 mL (1 cup)	40
Green peas, frozen, boiled	250 mL (1 cup)	38
Tuna fish, white, canned in oil, drained	85 g (3 oz)	6

Celery, raw	250 mL (1 cup)	30
Lettuce, iceberg, raw	250 mL (1 cup)	17
Kiwi, raw	1 fruit	5
Asparagus, boiled, drained	250 mL (1 cup)	92
Blackberries, raw	250 mL (1 cup)	29
Blueberries, raw	250 mL (1 cup)	29
Marinara sauce for pasta, ready-to-serve	125 mL (½ cup)	18
Cucumber, with peel, raw	125 mL (½ cup)	9
Canola oil	1 Tbsp	10
Olive oil	1 Tbsp	8
Pistachios, dry roasted, salt added	28 g (1 oz) [47 nuts]	3.7
Tea, brewed, prepared with tap water	175 mL (6 fl oz)	0.0

Green and black tea leaves do contain vitamin K before they are steeped in water, but a small serving of the hot tea itself does not.

Check with your doctor before you take any supplements or herbal products. Some of these may contain vitamin K. If you already take a product that contains vitamin K, do not stop taking it without talking with your doctor first.

How vitamin K and warfarin affect your risks and your test results

To find out how well warfarin is working, you will get blood tests to measure how long it takes for your blood to clot. Your lab results are called your Prothrombin Time (PT) and International Normalized Ratio (INR) values. You may just hear about your INR.

Your INR needs to be in a safe range—not too high and not too low. Vitamin K can change how warfarin works, which changes your INR.

- **Vitamin K lowers your INR values.** The lower your INR, the less time it takes for your blood to clot. A low INR means that warfarin isn't working well enough to prevent a dangerous blood clot.
- **Warfarin raises your INR values.** The higher your INR, the more time it takes for your blood to clot. A high INR means that warfarin is working too well, so you bleed more quickly and easily. This can be dangerous. Keeping your warfarin and vitamin K intake steady every day helps keep you in a safe INR range.

[Health Tools](#)

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