



*"Partners In Health Care"*



**University Hospital  
Patient Education Program**

## Anticoagulation Medicines (Blood Thinners)

Anticoagulant medicines help to prevent new blood clots from forming, and help to keep existing blood clots from getting worse.

**Name of Your Medicine:** \_\_\_\_\_

### How Should Your Medicine Be Taken?

- Follow your doctor's instructions on how much medicine to use and how often.

\_\_\_\_\_ Amount

\_\_\_\_\_ How Often?

- Try to take the medicine at the same time every day.
- Do not stop taking your medicine unless told to do so by your doctor.

### If You Miss a Dose:

- If you miss a dose or forget to take your medicine, take it as soon as you can. If you miss more than one dose, call your doctor.
- Do not take extra medicine to make up for a missed dose unless directed by your doctor.

### How to Store and Dispose of This Medicine:

- Store the medicine in a closed container at room temperature, away from heat, moisture, and direct light.
- Ask your pharmacist or doctor, or health caregiver how to dispose of any leftover medicine when finished.

### Drugs and Foods to Avoid:

- Some medicines such as aspirin and ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®) can cause increased bleeding with anticoagulation medicines. Always ask your doctor or pharmacist before using any other medicine, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products.
- Tell any doctor, dentist or pharmacist that you are taking this medicine.
- This medicine works best when you eat about the same amount of vitamin K in your food every day. Some foods high in vitamin K are green leafy vegetables (spinach, kale, collard green, mustard green), liver and green tea.
- You should avoid drinking grapefruit and cranberry juice or products.
- Do not drink alcohol while you are using this medicine.

## Avoiding Injury:

- You may bleed and bruise more easily while you are using this medicine. Stay away from rough sports or other situations where you could be bruised, cut, or injured.
- Brush and floss your teeth gently.
- Be careful when using sharp objects, including razors and fingernail clippers.
- Avoid picking your nose and blow your nose gently if needed.
- Wear helmets and/or pads when participating in activities such as biking, rollerblading, skateboarding, skating or other activities where falls may occur.

## Follow-up Visits With Your Doctor

- Be sure to keep all your doctor's appointments especially blood tests to make sure your medicine is working well.

My blood test will be done every \_\_\_\_\_  Day(s)  Week(s)

- Your doctor may change the dose of your medicine based on your test results

Call your doctor (tel. # \_\_\_\_\_) right away or go to the nearest Emergency Room if you notice any of these side effects:

- **Severe Allergic Reaction:** Swelling or tingling in your face, hands, mouth or throat, chest pain or tightness, trouble breathing, swallowing, speech, severe headache, sore throat.
- Bleeding from your gums, nose, cuts or wounds that do not stop.
- Coughing up blood.
- Vomiting of blood or material that looks like coffee grounds.
- Cold clammy skin, confusion, fast, weak pulse, or sweating.
- Dizziness, fainting, or lightheadedness.
- Heavy menstrual bleeding (not normal for you).
- Serious injuries or severe swelling from injury.
- Red spots or bruises on your skin or change in skin color.
- Red or dark brown urine.
- Red or black stools.

## Other Side Effects

- Injection site pain or infection (if applicable).
- Upset stomach.
- Diarrhea.

## Other Information

- Carry an Anticoagulation Medication Alert Card or bracelet to let any emergency caregivers know that you are using anticoagulant medicine.

June 2010 **Approved By:** The Patient and Family Education Committee

### REFERENCES:

2010 Physicians' Desk Reference (64<sup>th</sup> Edition)

G.K. Dresser, C. Munoz, M. Cruikshank, M. Kovacs, J.D. Spence. "Grapefruit Juice-Warfarin Interaction in Anticoagulated Patients" *Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics* 65, 193-193 (February 1999).