

Dietary Considerations in Coumadin[®] Patients

Coumadin[®] (generic name “warfarin”) acts by impairing the function of Vitamin K. Dietary intake of Vitamin K will counteract the medicinal purpose of Coumadin[®]. Intake of large amounts of Vitamin K can diminish the effect of Coumadin[®], permitting the blood to clot. Likewise, if you eat too little vitamin K, it may cause your blood to become too thin.

It is difficult for most patients to avoid all Vitamin K containing foods. A prudent alternative is to be sure that you eat the same amount of Vitamin K on a regular basis. As an example, the following are foods known to be high in Vitamin K

Kale	Spinach
Broccoli	Turnip greens
Cauliflower	Chick peas
Brussels sprouts	Green tea
Beef, pork, or chicken livers	Soybean oil
Soy protein products (including tofu)	Vitamins A & E (large doses)

If your regular diet already contains these food items, you don't need to eliminate these foods from your diet. **Consistency in your daily eating pattern is the key!** Your medication can be adjusted to the amount of vitamin K typically in your diet. If you suddenly increase or decrease the amount of vitamin K in your diet, your medication will not work properly.

II. What is the best diet to follow while I am on Coumadin[®]?

A. A healthy, low fat diet following the Food Guide Pyramid is the best diet to follow.

B. It is important for you to keep the vitamin K content of your diet **consistent**. The amount of vitamin K you eat affects the amount of Coumadin[®] you require.

C. Be sure to tell your doctor if you change your diet. The medication will need to be adjusted to the amount of vitamin K in your diet.

III. Does this mean I should avoid foods with a lot of vitamin K?

Absolutely not! Some foods that are high in vitamin K (i.e. leafy, green vegetables, broccoli, and cauliflower) can contribute to a healthy diet. Your efforts should be focused on keeping your intake of vitamin K consistent from day to day. The first step is to evaluate your **typical** intake of vitamin K foods by reviewing the food list in this packet.

IV. Does cooking, freezing, or drying foods change how much vitamin K is in them?

Although there is little information about the effects of cooking, freezing, or drying on the vitamin K content of foods, it appears that the vitamin K content of cooked, frozen, or dried foods is about the same as fresh foods.

V. What to do from here.

Evaluate your typical vitamin K intake by reviewing the food list provided. The list contains foods that are known to be high in vitamin K, as well as a few others that are not very high, but are often asked about by Coumadin[®] patients. If you do not see a particular food on the list, it most likely contains very little vitamin K, however, be sure investigate a given food if you are concerned.

VI. Using the Vitamin K food list:

A. First, review the list to find foods that you are presently eating. Each list contains the same information. The column on the left organizes foods from the highest vitamin K content to lowest, while the column on the right is in alphabetical order. Observe the amount of vitamin K contained in the foods you eat. If you typically eat a larger portion than what is listed, be sure to increase the vitamin K value proportionally. (i.e. there is 40ug of vitamin K in ½ cup of lettuce, but you eat 2 cups worth in your salad, so you would actually have 160ug of vitamin K in total). Add up the total amount of vitamin K that you typically consume in a day. Whatever it may be, 100, 200, 300, 400ug, etc., your job is to keep this daily intake as consistent as possible. By selecting combinations of foods, and/or adjusting portion sizes you should be able to consume about the same amount of vitamin K each day.

CAUTION - the following should be taken only with your physician's approval, because they also thin your blood, thus increasing the effect of your medication: **alcohol, garlic pills, fish oil capsules, vitamin E.**

Vitamin K tablets can also interfere with your Coumadin® medication. Be sure to get your physician's approval, if you take vitamin K tablets or a multi-vitamin pill with vitamin K included.

<i>(Highest to lowest)</i>			<i>(Alphabetical)</i>		
Food Item	Portion Size	Vit. K (ug)	Food Item	Portion Size	Vit. K (ug)
Seaweed (Nori)	2 sheets	511	Alfalfa sprouts	½ cup	16
Turnip greens	½ cup	470	Artichoke	½ cup	42
Collard greens	½ cup	440	Asparagus	½ cup	51
Spinach	½ cup	360	Avocado	½ cup	57
Brussels sprouts	½ cup	289	Broccoli	½ cup	113
Kale	½ cup	270	Brussels sprouts	½ cup	289
Swiss chard	½ cup	249	Cabbage	½ cup	80-100
Green tea	1 oz (leaves) **	199	Cauliflower	½ cup	96
Parsley	½ cup	162	Celery	½ cup	16
Green scallion	½ cup	155	Collard greens	½ cup	440
Broccoli	½ cup	113	Coriander	½ cup	52
Cauliflower	½ cup	96	Cucumber (with peel)	½ cup	6
Cabbage	½ cup	80-100	Endive	½ cup	69
Liver (beef, pork, chicken)	3.5 oz	80-100	Garbanzo beans	½ cup	22
Soybean oil	1 Tbsp	76	Green beans	½ cup	33
Endive	½ cup	69	Green peas	½ cup	22
Avocado	½ cup	57	Green pepper	½ cup	5
Coriander	½ cup	52	Green scallion	½ cup	155
Asparagus	½ cup	51	Green tea	1 oz (leaves)**	199
Mustard greens	½ cup	51	Green tomato	½ cup	50
Green tomato	½ cup	50	Kale	½ cup	270
Watercress	½ cup	42	Lettuce	½ cup	40
Artichoke	½ cup	42	Lima beans	½ cup	2
Lettuce	½ cup	40	Liver (beef, pork, chicken)	3.5 oz	80-100
Okra	½ cup	40	Mustard greens	½ cup	51
Soybeans	½ cup	34	Nettle leaves	½ cup	31
Green beans	½ cup	33	Okra	½ cup	40
Nettle leaves	½ cup	31	Parsley	½ cup	162
Red tomato	½ cup	25	Red tomato	½ cup	25
Garbanzo beans	½ cup	22	Seaweed (Nori)	2 sheets	511
Green peas	½ cup	22	Soybean oil	1 Tbsp	76
Alfalfa sprouts	½ cup	16	Soybeans	½ cup	34
Celery	½ cup	16	Spinach	½ cup	360
Cucumber (sliced with peel)	½ cup	6	Swiss chard	½ cup	249
Green pepper	½ cup	5	Tofu	½ cup	2.5
Tofu	½ cup	2.5	Turnip greens	½ cup	470
Lima beans	½ cup	2	Watercress	½ cup	42

· Ensure 8 oz can 18

** Current analytical findings indicate that the brew form green tea leaves has negligible vitamin K content.