



Why Patients Take Warfarin (Coumadin)

Doctors order patients to take warfarin for four major reasons. These reasons appear below.

Atrial Fibrillation (AFib)

AFib causes an abnormal, irregular heartbeat. Many people with AFib have no symptoms but have an increased risk of a stroke. Patients with AFib take blood thinners like warfarin to prevent blood clots that can lead to a stroke.

Mechanical Heart Valve Replacement

Patients with mechanical heart valves are at an increased risk for blood clots. Clots can lodge in the valve, causing a malfunction. Clots also can travel through the blood and cause a stroke. Blood thinners like warfarin help prevent blood clots that can lead to a stroke.

Pulmonary Embolism (PE)

A PE occurs when a blood clot gets stuck in the lung. Symptoms include shortness of breath, chest pain, dizziness or fainting. Blood thinners like warfarin help prevent blood clots that can lead to another PE. A PE can be fatal.

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)

A DVT occurs when a blood clot lodges in a vein. The result can be reduced or blocked blood flow, which causes swelling and pain. DVTs often happen in the “deep veins” of the legs, thighs or pelvis. Blood thinners like warfarin help prevent future blood clots from forming.