Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Warfarin Treatment for Heart Rhythm Disturbance

Version number: **8**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Warfarin Treatment for Heart Rhythm Disturbance

Patient Information

Cardiac Catheter Laboratory

- Author ID: PD
- Leaflet Ref: Card 007
- Version: 8
- Leaflet title: Warfarin Treatment for Heart Rhythm Disturbance
- Date Produced: February 2023
- Expiry Date: February 2025

Your doctor has diagnosed an irregular rhythm of your heart. This is a common condition occurring in about one in 100 people. On its own it is unlikely to cause a serious problem, but when it exists with certain other conditions, such as high blood pressure or other contributory factors that have an irregular heart rhythm, this may increase the chance of you having a stroke.

There are alternative anticoagulants available as a first line treatment for this heart rhythm disturbance but some patients who have certain types of conditions will need to be prescribed warfarin. Your doctor will discuss the reason why these alternatives have not been used, and warfarin is the choice of drug for your treatment.

The likelihood of a stroke is greatly reduced if you are treated with a drug called Warfarin.Without Warfarin the possibility is that in any year, five patients out of every 100 would suffer a stroke. With Warfarin, this is reduced to one in 100.

Warfarin is a lifelong treatment; it will not have any effect on the way you feel. It works by making the blood less able to clot. For this reason, it requires careful control so that you do not bleed excessively. However, two out of 100 patients on Warfarin may have bleeding episodes of which a quarter may be fatal. This risk is kept low by regular testing of your blood.

It is therefore very important, if you decide to have the treatment, that you take your tablets reliably and follow the “Do’s and Don’ts” set out here. You will need to attend regular blood monitoring at the anticoagulant Clinic. The appointments will be quite frequent at first but once stabilised; blood tests are needed about every six to eight weeks.

Warfarin is a treatment that has been available for many years and has been used to have a good effect in many thousands of people.

Dos and don’ts

- **Do** take your tablets at the same time every day.
- **Do** eat regular meals.
- **Do** check with your doctor or Pharmacist before taking non-prescription drugs.
- **Do** call your doctor if you experience bruising or bleeding gums when brushing your teeth.

- **Don’t** take more or less than the prescribed amount.
- **Don’t** have excessive or irregular alcohol intake.
- **Don’t** miss your Blood Test appointments.



Version number: **8**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

All rights reserved © 2026
WWL Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust