

ADVICE TO PATIENTS ON WARFARIN WHO REQUIRE DENTAL EXTRACTION

If you are taking warfarin and require dental extraction there is an increased risk of bleeding afterwards. (If bleeding does occur, it is usually easy to stop, e.g. with pressure on the wound or by putting in a stitch). However, if your warfarin is stopped there is a small risk that a blood clot may develop. In general, as long as your INR (the level to which your blood is thinned) is below 4.0 it is considered safer to continue with your normal dose of warfarin. If your INR is unstable you may need to be referred to hospital for your dental surgery.

It is important to make an individual plan for you and therefore you should proceed as follows:

- 1) You and your dentist should agree a date for the planned extraction.
- 2) You or your dentist should arrange to have your INR checked.

If your GP normally monitors your INR, arrange to have this checked at the surgery within 3 days, ideally within 24 hours of the planned extraction. If your INR is normally monitored at your local hospital, arrange to attend the anticoagulant clinic within 36 hours of your dental appointment.

- 3) If your INR is normally kept between 2 and 4.0 and is not above 4.0 when it is checked, it is safe to continue with your normal dose of warfarin, and your dentist can proceed with the extraction(s).
- 4) **Do not stop your warfarin unless you are specifically told to do so by your GP/Anticoagulant clinic.**
- 5) If your INR is checked within 3 days of the procedure and you are told by your doctor that you can continue at the same dose, you do not need another blood test. If your INR is above 4 and your doctor changes your dose, you will need another INR test before the procedure can go ahead. The extraction may have to be postponed.
- 6) On the evening after the procedure, if there is no significant bleeding, restart your warfarin at the normal dose. If your INR was reduced before that procedure, it should be checked the following week.
- 7) If you bleed excessively after the dental extraction contact your dentist. If you are unable to do this, go to the Accident & Emergency department of your local hospital and inform the staff that you are taking warfarin.