



Situational Safety: Cutting Edges

Patients on warfarin are at higher risk for prolonged bleeding from cuts and scrapes.¹ Obvious cutting hazards in the kitchen include utensils such as forks and knives. Metal cutting edges from plastic wrap and aluminum foil packaging also present additional risks in the kitchen.

Most kitchens in America have a drawer with plastic sandwich bags, plastic wrap, aluminum foil, and wax paper. The packages of these products have a raised, serrated metal edge about 12" long. Products with this type of 'cutting edge' include:

- **Aluminum Foil**
- **Wax Paper**
- **Plastic Wrap**

Patients run a daily risk of severe cuts from these raised, metal edges. Cuts on or near the wrist are most likely, when patients reach into the drawer to grab a box. To reduce the risk of accidental cuts, patients should turn the boxes so that the cutting edges face down. In most cases this does reduce risk, but other members of the household may not always return the box to the "safe" position.

The following situations can increase the chance of boxes being returned to the "danger" position:

Children visits

Grandchildren visits

In-law visits

Caterers for parties

Change in product brands

Neighbor luncheons

Labeling boxes that have an exposed cutting edge can reduce the incidence of dangerous cuts. A color-coded label that reads "This Side Up" will help ensure that boxes are returned to the drawer with the cutting blade down, regardless of who uses the product.

Cuts and lacerations near the wrist and hand can be a serious, potentially life-threatening injury, so patients should call their physician immediately when a cut occurs. Patients with INR levels above 4.0 are at high risk for prolonged bleeding. Patients are encouraged to carry an identification card stating that they take warfarin, and to keep all scheduled blood test appointments.¹

Visit: www.PTINR.com

¹ Bristol-Myers Squibb Company. (2007). *Medication Guide for Coumadin Tablets and Coumadin for Injection* [Package Insert]. Princeton, NJ: Bristol-Myers Squibb Company.