



Situational Safety: Dishwasher Dangers

Patients taking warfarin don't walk by the dishwasher and see it as a potential safety hazard, but it is. The risk lies in what goes in the dishwasher – knives and forks.

Patients on warfarin are cautious to avoid causing cuts or bruises. The dishwasher presents both dangers. Dishwashers normally have a basket for utensils. Many patients place utensils facing up for more effective cleaning and drying. Placing knives and forks 'blades up' creates a ongoing risk for a dangerous cut or puncture wound each time a patient places additional items in the dishwasher or unpacks it.

In addition to knife and fork injuries, open dishwasher doors present a danger for series bruises to a patient's shin. Dishwasher doors are frequently left open while they are being loaded following a meal or emptied. Patients need to be cautious when walking close to the open door.

Reduce your risk

To reduce the risk of injury from cuts, patients are encouraged to place knives and forks with their points and blades facing downward. To avoid a painful bruise on the shin, patients should load all pots, pans, dishes and silverware into the dishwasher at once then close the door.

Patients on warfarin are at increased risk for prolonged bleeding from simple cuts or bruises.¹ Cuts from knives can be deep require immediate medical attention. Bruises are an internal bleed and also require an immediate phone call to the patient's physician as it is not possible to determine the severity of a bruise. Patients taking warfarin may have a prolonged bleeding event and encouraged to remain in their target INR range to reduce their risk of a dangerous bleeding event.¹

Reducing the risk of dishwasher accidents may require a change in the way things have always been done. While change is often difficult – this change in made may save a trip to the emergency room and the expense of emergency care.

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.