



Situational Safety: Sharp Foods

Most patients on warfarin are aware that diet is an important part of a safe and healthy warfarin lifestyle. Counseling on diet always focuses on vitamin K, and the need for patients to remain consistent and to communicate with their doctors when starting or stopping a food rich in vitamin K.¹

With the possible exception of cheese, patients normally do not think of food as being “sharp”. But there are foods that place patients at risk for puncture wounds or cuts. Some of these foods include:

Popcorn	Lobster	Nuts
Fish	Shrimp	Ribs

Any food with a shell or bone fragment has the potential of causing a cut that could lead to a major bleeding event. Cuts on the tongue or mouth are not always easily perceived, but can result in significant blood loss especially in warfarin patients. Blood coming from the mouth can be frightening and cause confusion about the source of the bleeding, so it can be difficult to stop bleeding from a cut or puncture wound in the mouth or throat.

Patients on warfarin need to be careful about the food they eat. Even a fragment of shrimp tail can inflict a mouth wound and, if swallowed, could possibly cut the esophagus, stomach, or intestine.

Foods with sharp edges can pose a danger, but patients do not have to avoid their favorite foods. Patients who experience bleeding from the mouth should seek medical attention. These injuries require professional care, as infection is a serious secondary concern. To improve the safety of warfarin, patients should also remain in the target range determined by their physician and carry an identification card stating they are taking warfarin.¹

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