



## Situational Safety: Your INR is low

Warfarin monitoring, with a simple blood test, is essential to ensure that you are taking the correct dose of warfarin (Coumadin®). You may be at increased risk for blood clots if your blood test result, which is expressed as an international normalized ratio (INR) value, is lower than your target range.<sup>1</sup> If your most recent test result(s) indicates that your INR value falls below your target range, you should consider the following reasons for low INR.

### Compliance error

It is important to take warfarin exactly as directed. Missing a dose of warfarin causes INR values to drop. If you forget a dose, take it as soon as possible on the same day.<sup>1</sup> A pillbox might help you remember to take warfarin every day as prescribed. You should receive specific instructions from your healthcare provider regarding missed doses.

### Diet

Certain foods and beverages can influence your INR test result. A test result lower than expected may result from the influence of vitamin K in your food or drink. Vitamin K is not often listed on package labels, making it difficult to track vitamin K consumption. Vitamin K reverses the effect of warfarin and lowers INR values.<sup>1</sup> Foods that are very high in vitamin K should be consumed only in moderation and with the approval of your healthcare professional. Dark, leafy vegetables often contain high levels of vitamin K, as do some less recognized sources, which may include salad dressings, mayonnaise products, teas, oils, and products made with certain oils. A list of vitamin K-rich foods is found behind the broccoli icon in the “tools and resource” section of [www.PTINR.com](http://www.PTINR.com).

### Dietary supplements

Caution should be exercised when dietary supplements are taken with warfarin. Some dietary supplements (also called botanicals, herbal supplements, or natural medicines) contain ingredients that can decrease (or increase) an INR test result.<sup>1</sup> You should inform your healthcare provider of all dietary supplements and over the counter medications you are currently taking.

An INR test result lower than a patient’s target range indicates an insufficient level of “blood thinning”. Your healthcare professional will help you carefully return warfarin to a safe, therapeutic level.

Visit: [www.PTINR.com](http://www.PTINR.com)

<sup>1</sup> Bristol-Myers Squibb Company. (2007). Coumadin [Package Insert]. Princeton, NJ: Bristol-Myers Squibb Company.