Testing Your INR

It is important to test or monitor your blood regularly by testing your INR or International Normalized Ratio. The INR test measures the time it takes our blood to clot, or prothrombin time (PT). This test is often referred to as PT/INR test. Your doctor will give you a target called an INR target range specifically for your condition. The test also measures the time it takes our blood to clot and is expressed as a number. Your doctor will give you an INR target range specifically for your condition. The higher the number the longer it will take your blood to clot.

This test can be performed in your doctor’s office, at a clinic/lab, or at home. Because your dose is based on the INR blood test, it is very important your INR is checked regularly. Your blood test result can change from your diet, your health, and other medications; therefore it is very important your INR is checked frequently.

Method of Blood Testing

Home INR Monitoring
• Performed by patient or caregiver at home
• Same INR monitors and finger stick as used in doctor’s office
• Results available in less than 2 minutes
• Patients learn results without having to wait for the lab

Venous Draw
• Needle withdrawal by a professional
• Sent to outside laboratory for analysis
• Pricing and accuracy varies according to reagent used by lab
• Patients are called with test results

Point of Care (POC)
• Sample taken by finger stick at doctor’s office
• Testing monitors use most sensitive reagents possible
• Results available in less than 2 minutes
• Patients learn results without having to wait for the lab

With portable monitoring devices for INR testing, you will be able to test more frequently, which has been proven to reduce the risk of bleeding and clotting. Testing is easy and convenient: a simple fingerstick and a drop of blood on a test strip is all you need.

Home INR Monitoring has many benefits, including:
• The freedom to test in the comfort and convenience of home
• Testing your INR at home is easy with a simple fingerstick and a home monitor from Alere
• Frequent testing helps you stay in range
• Coverage by Medicare and most private insurance

Call Alere to start testing your INR at home 1.877.262.4669

Stroke Awareness: Assessing Your Risk

Stroke can affect people of all different backgrounds and all ages. In the United States alone, almost 800,000 strokes occur each year. Stroke is the 4th leading cause of death in the US, with more than 133,000 victims dying in 2008. Stroke affects people of all ages, not only older adults. Nearly 25% of all strokes occur in people less than 65 years of age.

The Department of Health and Human Services launched the Million Hearts™ campaign in 2011 which focuses on preventing a million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. The ABCS (outlined below) of Health are identifying people at risk for stroke and also helping to prevent Cardiovascular Disease. The primary focus of the ABCS is to prevent cardiovascular disease, including stroke, and improving a person’s overall health.

ABCS includes:
• Aspirin Therapy – ask your doctor if taking aspirin is right for you.
• Blood Pressure Control – 50% of the world’s strokes are caused by elevated blood pressure levels
• Cholesterol Management – work with your physician to monitor your cholesterol regularly. Follow your physician’s recommendation for diet, exercise and medication (if required).
• Smoking Cessation – help is available by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW!

Regular exercise, eating a healthy diet, preventing or controlling diabetes and limiting alcohol intake along with the ABCS are a good start to lowering your risk for stroke.
Cocoa May Reduce Blood Pressure:

A recent analysis of 20 studies, Does chocolate reduce blood pressure? A meta-analysis, found that daily eating of dark chocolate and antioxidant-rich cocoa can help lower blood pressure. Across the studies, the daily doses ranged from a spoon of cocoa powder to a full bar of chocolate, but overall blood pressure fell by an average 2.8/2.2 mm Hg. Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury. The reason provided for the small reduction of blood pressure was flavanols, compounds found in cocoa that produce a chemical which helps relax blood vessels so blood passes more easily. Not all chocolate or cocoa products are created equal though. Processing the cocoa or chocolate content dark chocolate bar. Dutch processing for fresh cocoa bean down to 0.5% in high-cocoa can often reduce the flavanols by 10% in the equal though. Processing the cocoa or chocolate

Flavonoids are the chemical in cocoa that produce a chemical which helps relax blood vessels so blood passes more easily. Processing the cocoa or chocolate

Improve your INR stability by testing once a week with HOME INR MONITORING. Go to PTINR.com for more information.

Q&A: Can Hot Weather Influence My INR?

Fluctuations in temperature and humidity have a profound effect on patients, particularly the elderly. Heat related stress and uncomfortable humidity (dew point) typical in the summer season elevates patients’ INR. Weather conditions, especially intense heat, have been known to alter patients’ INR. Hot weather over a prolonged period of time has been shown to elevate INR values - even on the most stable patients. The additional effect of humidity and high dew points make it virtually impossible to cool the body and results in the potential for INR to be higher than normal.

Make every effort not to become over-heated, drink plenty of non-alcohol beverages and keep close to your physician’s orders while keeping all summer INR tests. Contact your doctor for more information about summer’s heat and your INR.

Outdoor Summer Safety:

Summer brings outdoor activities that sometimes require extra planning to be safe. It is especially important to plan ahead if you are taking warfarin since warfarin patients are at increased risk for bleeding events. If you are planning activities outdoors, make sure you have a first aid kit on hand. Enjoy outdoor activities more safely this summer with these safety tips:

- Wear water shoes while swimming or at the beach. Shells and rocks can be sharp.
- Apply sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher with both UVA and UVB protection) often, immediately and then after two hours, to protect from sunburn.
- Be careful of rip tides and rip current warnings. Swim near lifeguards.
- All boaters and swimmers should use lifejackets.
- Use pliers for baiting and unhooking fish.
- Keep hydrated by drinking water. Have plenty of cold, non-alcoholic beverages to help with that dry, thirsty feeling during activity.
- Use caution when hiking or walking in the outdoors to prevent falling. Wear closed-toe sturdy shoes.
- Use bug spray to prevent tick and bug bites.
- Wear light-colored, lightweight clothing to stay cool and wear a hat to protect from the sun’s rays.

Follow these outdoor safety reminders and have a fun and safe summer!

For more information on living healthy while on warfarin, go to PTINR.com.
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The reason provided for the small reduction of blood pressure was flavanols, compounds found in cocoa that produce a chemical which helps relax blood vessels so blood passes more easily. Not all chocolate or cocoa products are created equal though. Processing the cocoa or chocolate can often reduce the flavanols by 10% in the fresh cocoa bean down to 0.5% in high-cocoa content dark chocolate bar. Dutch processing for improving your INR stability by testing once a week with HOME INR MONITORING®

Go to PTINR.com for more information.

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The Cochrane Collaboration, based in the UK, reviewed the research to investigate the effectiveness of health claims. The reduction in blood pressure from eating dark chocolate is modest and eating it is no substitute for taking medication, or reducing your blood pressure through exercise. If you are taking warfarin, you should be happy to know that according to the USDA, (US Department of Agriculture) dark chocolate has low vitamin K content, around 2 mcg per ounce. For additional information about the vitamin K content in foods and beverages, visit our Vitamin K Finder on PTINR.com® website. Like anything else you eat, when you are on warfarin, you need to have a consistent diet. As always, talk to your doctor before making any changes to your diet.

Winter brings outdoor activities that sometimes require extra planning to be safe. It is especially important to plan ahead if you are taking warfarin since warfarin patients are at increased risk for bleeding events. If you are planning activities outdoors, make sure you have a first aid kit on hand. Enjoy outdoor activities more safely this summer with these safety tips:

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WellLife: A guide for living on warfarin

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WellLife: A guide for living on warfarin is brought to you by Alere™ Home Monitoring. Alere also sponsors PTINR.com, your trusted online anticoagulation resource for doctors and patients.

For more information about Alere’s INR testing, please visit millionhearts.hhs.gov/index.html.

Alere Home Monitoring, Inc. 6445 National Drive, Livermore, CA 94550 1.877.262.4669

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Safety: Outdoor Summer Safety

Health Tip: Signs of Stroke

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