



Peri-operative Warfarin Management

What to do Around the Time of Surgery

I am having surgery. Why am I at the Thrombosis Clinic?

Because you are having surgery, you need to stop your warfarin. You are here to get advice about when to stop taking your warfarin pills and decide whether you need to get another medication to protect you from having blood clots while you are off warfarin.

What types of blood clots am I at risk for when I stop warfarin?

That depends on why you are taking warfarin.

If you are taking warfarin for an irregular heart beat (called *atrial fibrillation*) or for a mechanical heart valve, then warfarin protects you from having a stroke.

If you are taking warfarin because you have had blood clots in your legs (*deep vein thrombosis* or *DVT*) or lungs (*pulmonary embolism* or *PE*), then warfarin helps prevent another blood clot.

What is my risk of having a DVT or PE?

This depends on the following factors:

- When you last had a blood clot
- How many episodes of blood clot you have had
- If you have cancer or are receiving treatment for cancer
- If you have an inherited reason for having blood clots

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IMPORTANT

Contact the Thrombosis Clinic:

If your surgery is changed to another date

If you have signs or symptoms of stroke, DVT or PE

If you have any signs of bleeding after your procedure

Tel: 604.675.2481

What are the symptoms of DVT or PE?

- Sensation that your heart is racing or pounding
- Redness or warmth in the affected leg or arm
- Swelling or pain in the affected leg or arm
- Unexplained shortness of breath
- Pressure or sharp pain in the chest

Find out more at:
www.ThrombosisBC.ca

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Tel: 604.675.2481
www.ThrombosisBC.ca



Thrombosis Program

Vancouver Coastal Health, University of British Columbia

What are the symptoms of a stroke?

- Unable to talk properly, slurred speech
- Having trouble moving an arm, leg or one side of the body
- Having numbness or tingling on a part of your body
- Suddenly losing whole or part of your vision. Some patients describe having a black curtain drop in front of their eyes
- Loss of consciousness (*black out*)
- Seizures

Call 9-1-1 if you have these symptoms

What can be done to lower my risk of having a stroke or clot?

Your doctor will decide whether your risk of clotting is high enough that you need another medication (*usually a drug that must be injected under the skin*) to protect you when you come off warfarin. You may have to take injections before and after surgery.

Do I stop my aspirin or clopidogrel (Plavix®) before surgery?

You need to ask your cardiologist or surgeon about whether to stop these drugs. This will depend on the reason you are taking aspirin and the type of surgery or procedure you are going to have.



It is important to stop herbal supplements and herbal medications about a week before surgery because some of them affect your ability to clot.

BEFORE Surgery or Procedure

Once the doctor in the Thrombosis Clinic has seen you, a personalized schedule will be made and given to you so you will know:

- When to stop your warfarin
- Whether you need to take injections before or after your procedure
- When to restart your warfarin after your procedure
- When to go for your blood test after your procedure
- Who will follow your blood test results

The Thrombosis Nurse will review the schedule with you, teach you how to do the injections and give you a lab requisition to get your blood check if needed.

Your Thrombosis Clinic doctor will give you a prescription for the injections if you need it before surgery.

AFTER Surgery or Procedure

The schedule will also outline what you have to do after the procedure. This will depend on the type of surgery, where you are having it done, and whether you have to stay in the hospital.

Usually, you will restart warfarin at your usual dose as soon as the bleeding has stopped. Your surgeon or doctor doing the procedure will tell you when it is OK to restart your warfarin.

PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTION ON THE SCHEDULE

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT TO DO, CALL THE THROMBOSIS CLINIC at 604.675.2481

The schedule will be faxed to your surgeon and your family doctor.

