

## First Aid

### First Aid for Patients on Warfarin

Patients taking warfarin (brand name Coumadin®) enjoy the same quality of life as patients not taking the medication but may require a little extra care in the event of an accident or injury. Knowing what to do and what you'll need before an accident can save time, money and reduce your recovery time.

First aid measures at home are not a replacement for professional care. All injuries, no matter how small they seem, should be reported to your clinician so they can document the event and check your last INR value.

### Cuts and Lacerations

You may bleed longer after a cut or scrape. First aid measures include: cleaning the area, applying a clean sterile bandage and applying constant pressure to the wound to stop the bleeding. You should avoid "checking" the bandage to see if the bleeding has stopped as this may interfere with the clot that is forming. A scrape or cut that does not stop bleeding within a

reasonable period of time (30 minutes) requires immediate medical attention. To avoid cuts from shaving – electric razors are recommended for patients taking warfarin. For outdoor activity, work gloves are always recommended.

### Nosebleeds

Nosebleeds are the result of a break of small blood vessels in your inner nose. Low humidity, injury or high blood pressure are some common causes of nosebleeds. Applying steady, gentle pressure to the area for 5-10 minutes, without tipping your head back, will slow and then stop the bleeding. Nosebleeds lasting more than 30 minutes require medical attention.<sup>2</sup>

### Bumps and bruises

Bumps and bruises may not seem serious to you at first but they might be a sign of too much warfarin. Elevating your injury and applying a cloth covered ice bag over a bump or bruise for 20 minutes several times a day will relieve some of your pain<sup>1</sup> and help reduce swelling.

**Contact your healthcare professional after any injury**

For more information on improving your safety,  
visit **www.PTINR.com** or call **1-877-262-4669**



WellLife: A guide for living on warfarin  
is brought to you by Alere™ Home Monitoring

1. Mayo Clinic Staff (2008). Bruise: First Aid. Retrieved May 5, 2009 from MayoClinic.com: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/first-aid-bruise/FA00039>
2. Wittkowsky, A. (2006). Prevention and treatment of nosebleeds. Retrieved May 2, 2008, from University of Washington Medical Center Anticoagulation