

# What is a Warfarin Diet?

**I**f you are a patient with heart disease, eating healthy comes as no surprise to you. Your doctor or dietitian would have recommended a particular diet, and it is important that you follow it. If a special diet has not been recommended, a balanced, and heart-healthy nutrition can speed healing and lessen fatigue.

Weight control is also important for your heart health; excess weight increases the work of the heart and slows recovery.

However, if you are diagnosed with valvular heart disease, a blood thinner may be prescribed to you. Warfarin is an anticoagulant drug that helps to reduce blood clots. Although there is no specific “warfarin diet”, certain foods, herbal supplements, drinks, and alcohol can render warfarin less effective.

## Food

Try not to make any sudden changes in your vitamin K intake as that may affect the effects of warfarin. Be consistent with your vitamin K intake by monitoring how often you eat foods rich in vitamin K as well as the portion size.

Eating a balanced diet certainly aids the effectiveness of warfarin. Consume regular amounts of vitamin K rich vegetables such as kale, water spinach, mustard green, turnip greens, spinach, watercress, green leaf lettuce, brussel sprouts, broccoli, parsley but not more than one serving per day. Inconsistent intake of vitamin K will lead to fluctuations in your INR (International Normalised Ratio) readings.

There are no restrictions on consuming low vitamin K vegetables such as peas,

celery, cucumber, mushroom, eggplant, and carrot.

However do avoid fruits like cranberry, pomegranate, grapefruit, and their juices as they increase the effect of warfarin.

## Herbal Products & Supplements

Certain herbal products and supplements may have interactions with warfarin. It is best to avoid the intake of the following:

### Traditional medicines

Danshen, dong guai, goji berries, cordyceps, Ginseng, Eurycoma longifolia (*Tongkat Ali*).

### Herbal supplements

Ginkgo Biloba, St. John's wort, wheatgrass, spirulina, and alfalfa tablets.

### Dietary supplements

Fish oil, garlic pills, vitamin A, vitamin E, Coenzyme Q10, vitamin C, vitamin K.

## Alcohol

*“Can I drink alcohol while taking warfarin?”*

It is best to avoid alcohol consumption. Alcohol can change the way your body responds to warfarin. If you must have it, limit your alcohol intake to not more than 2 servings per day for men, 1 serving per day for women. Here is the recommended serving portion:



Liquor  
1 1/2 ounces  
(45ml)



Wine  
5 ounces  
(150ml)



Beer  
12 ounces  
(360ml)

**Note:** Drink responsibly and with accordance to all culture and religion pertaining to you.



*Green and leafy vegetables  
are usually high in vitamin K*