



Warfarin News You Can Use

Information for patients of the Brigham and Women's Hospital
Anticoagulation Management Service

Volume 3, Issue 2

August 2018

Our Staff and Services

About Us

The Anticoagulation Management Service (AMS) at Brigham and Women's Hospital manages approximately 3000 patients on anticoagulants. We are staffed by ten pharmacists, four advanced practice pharmacy students, and one administrative assistant. Our Supervisor is Katelyn Sylvester, PharmD, and we work in collaboration with our Medical Directors Dr. Jean Connors and Dr. Samuel Goldhaber. Our service has also received the honor of being named a national Anticoagulation Center of Excellence by the Anticoagulation Forum for the past 10 years.

How to Contact the Clinic

Phone: (617) 264-3000

Fax: (617) 264-3011

Email: BWHAnticoag@partners.org

Clinician Extensions

For faster service, use your clinician's specific line

Katelyn Sylvester: x 1

Themio Papadopoulos & Peter Collins: x 2

Gina Dube & Magie Pham: x 3

Nicole Vincze Irving: x 4

Andrea Lewin & David Appel: x 5

Amy Levesque: x 6

Laura Hill & Sarra Ben Ghorbal: x 7

General Mailbox: x 8

Clinic Hours

Monday - Friday: 9:00 - 4:30 (lunch from 12:00 -1:00)

Voicemail is checked throughout the day

We are closed on weekends and holidays and will return voicemails on the next business day.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why do I have to take Warfarin in the evenings?

A: AMS clinicians prefer that patients take their warfarin in the evening so that same day changes can be made once the INR is processed. If you take your warfarin in the morning, we must wait until the following day to make any dose adjustments.

Q: What does it mean if my INR is high / low?

A: When your INR is very low, that means that you are at a higher risk for a clotting event (like a deep vein thrombosis or stroke). If your INR is high, that means you are over-anticoagulated and at an increased risk of bleeding.

Q: What does the INR mean?

A: The INR result tells us how anticoagulated your blood is. For example, an INR of 2.5 indicates that your blood is taking 2.5 times longer to form a clot than someone who is not on warfarin. For reference, a patient who is not taking warfarin generally has an INR of ≤ 1.2 .



WHEN TO CONTACT THE CLINIC

- 1 Unusual signs of bleeding or bruising
- 2 If you start, stop, or change any medications
- 3 Any change in diet or alcohol intake
- 4 If you miss a dose of warfarin
- 5 For any illness
- 6 If you schedule a surgery or any type of procedure
- 7 **Report to the ER or call 911 if you experience symptoms of clotting or excessive bleeding**

Paging the Clinician On-call

The emergency paging system

There is an AMS clinician available by pager 24/7. You will receive instructions for paging by calling the regular clinic phone number during hours when we are closed. **This service is for true emergency situations only.** All other questions, concerns, or requests should be left as a voicemail message that will be dealt with on the next business day.

Appropriate times to page

- You are experiencing signs and symptoms of a clot or bleeding and want advice on what to do

Appropriate times to leave a message

- You did not receive call about your INR test result
- To request a prescription refill
- To confirm the next INR test date

Many labs do not provide same-day INR test results. If you tested but did not receive a call, please continue your current dose and follow-up with your clinician the next business day.

Staff Spotlight:

Sarra Ben Ghorbal



Hometown:

Born and raised in Tunis, Tunisia, North Africa.

Education and training:

PharmD / 5 years staff pharmacist experience at CVS and Walgreens

Professional experience:

Advanced practice clinical pharmacist at BWH AMS
Licensed pharmacist in California and Massachusetts.

Hobbies: Traveling all around the world, experiencing new food and new cultures, Photography, Japanese calligraphy, learning new languages (I speak 5 languages and working on learning a new one: Japanese).

Proudly providing care to our diverse patient population.

“Travel makes one modest. You see what a tiny place you occupy in the world.” Gustave Flaubert.



Warfarin Tip

CONSIDER WEARING A MEDICAL ID BRACELET TO HELP HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION IF AN EMERGENCY WERE TO OCCUR.



Feature Article

How to Protect Yourself while using Warfarin

Warfarin is a blood thinner that is used to prevent clots from forming. Unfortunately, one of the big side effects is bleeding. Thankfully, there are simple measures you can take to protect yourself and decrease your risk of bleeding.

Reduce the risk of bleeding:

There is a tendency to bleed more easily while taking warfarin. Wearing a seatbelt or a helmet when riding a bicycle or motorcycle can significantly reduce your risk of bleeding.

Warfarin and food:

Some foods and supplements can interfere with warfarin, increasing the risk of bleeding or clotting. Consult a healthcare provider before making major dietary changes (eg, starting a diet to lose weight, starting a nutritional supplement or vitamin).

Warfarin and alcohol:

Alcohol in low or moderate amounts is unlikely to have major effects on the INR. People who consume alcohol should limit intake to 1 to 2 servings per day. A serving is equal to 1 beer (12 ounces), 1 glass of wine (5 ounces), or 1.5 ounces of spirits. Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol can increase the risk of bleeding.

Warfarin and medications:

Several medications, herbs, and vitamins interact with warfarin increasing your risk of bleeding or clotting. Before taking any medications, it is important to notify your clinician to adjust the dose of warfarin. Some of the most common over-the-counter pain relievers, including those that contain aspirin or a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) such as ibuprofen (sample brand names: Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (sample brand name: Aleve), which may increase the risk of bleeding. Acetaminophen (brand name: Tylenol) may interact with warfarin if taken in doses over the recommended maximum of 3000 mg per 24-hour period.

Upcoming Events

1. Boston Blood Clot Support Group

September 17, 2018

Brigham & Women's Hospital 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

5th Floor, Shapiro Building

70 Francis St.

Boston, Ma 02115

Speakers:

To register, email events@natfonline.org

2. Online Support Group

September 18, 2018

Online 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

<https://natfonline.org/events/online-support-group-september/>

3. 2018 NATF Summit

October 26, 2018

Fairmont Copley Plaza 5:30 pm – 9:00 pm

<https://natfonline.org/events/2018-natf-summit/>

New BWH AMS Main Website coming soon

This website will be patient friendly and very easy to navigate. There will be information about:

- a. Past Seminars
- b. Upcoming Seminars/events
- c. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)
- d. Links to dosing calendar and warfarin guides
- e. Bio of your clinician
- f. How to contact the clinic / your clinician and many more