

Engelska

Advice to patients receiving prophylactic treatment against thrombosis (AVK treatment)

Introduction

One of the most important functions of the blood is its ability to form clots (coagulate). Under normal circumstances, blood only coagulates when you injure yourself and a blood vessel bursts. However, illness can cause the blood to form clots inside the blood vessels, e.g. as a result of atrial fibrillation or calcification of the arteries (atherosclerosis), which increases the risk of thrombosis.

To treat and prevent thrombosis, a drug is available which consists of warfarin, a substance that makes it harder for the blood to coagulate.

The drug is called Marevan in Norway and Denmark, and Waran in Sweden.

Dosage

The required daily dose of Marevan/Waran varies from patient to patient. Medication with Marevan/Waran requires the dosage to be individualised. Never change the dosage on your own. The tablets are taken once daily, usually at night. To be sure you take your medication, a tablet organizer or simple check mark in your diary may be helpful.

Blood tests

Since the Marevan/Waran dose must be individualised, tests are required in order to establish the optimal dose. At the start of treatment, blood tests (so-called PK INR) are taken frequently, but the interval is usually extended to about 4 weeks after some time.

Side effects

Unwanted side effects can occur with all medications. Side effects of Marevan/Waran are generally mild. Skin changes, diarrhoea or some hair loss may occur. Should this happen, please contact your prescribing clinic.

Risk of bleeding

Since Marevan/Waran reduces the ability of blood to coagulate, bleeding can occur. However, the risk of suffering a haemorrhage is

much smaller than the benefit you derive from the treatment to prevent thrombosis. If you nevertheless develop unexpected bleeding such as a nose bleed, vaginal bleeding, blood in the urine or faeces, the reason may be that your dosage is too high or that further investigation is required. Always contact your prescribing clinic in the event of unexpected bleeding.

If you develop bleeding that will not stop, you should contact the nearest emergency clinic at a hospital or treatment centre without delay. The same applies if you are hit hard on the head or abdomen in order to check that there is no internal bleeding.

Other medications

Some prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications as well as certain natural remedies can affect the metabolism of Marevan/Waran in your body. The effect of Marevan/Waran can either become too strong or too weak.

Painkillers that contain acetylsalicylic acid and so-called NSAIDs (anti-inflammatory drugs) increase the bleeding tendency in combination with Marevan/Waran and should therefore be avoided as a rule. Use only paracetamol for temporary pain relief and colds. Take as low a dose as possible and inform your prescribing clinic.

Diet

A varied diet with daily intake of vegetables is best in order to achieve a stable treatment effect. Some foods, especially green vegetables rich in Vitamin K can to some extent counteract the effect of Marevan/Waran. However, this is not important if you eat normal amounts of vegetables on a daily basis. Avoid excessive variations in your diet. If you want to lose weight, fast or go over to a vegetarian diet you must inform the clinic in charge of your treatment. The same applies if you become ill and lose your appetite and cannot eat properly.

Treatment card/Waran medallion

Always carry proof of your Marevan/Waran treatment and make sure it is visible and easily accessible. If you have an accident, it is important for healthcare personnel to find out quickly that you are being treated with Marevan/Waran.

Surgery and dental care

Whenever you have contact with physicians, dentists, hospitals or treatment centres you must inform them that you are being treated with Marevan/Waran. Always contact the clinic that prescribed your Marevan/Waran before undergoing surgery.

Pregnancy and breast-feeding

You must always inform your physician if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. Marevan/Waran must not be used during pregnancy. However, Marevan/Waran can be used while breast-feeding since the drug does not pass over into mother's milk. Nevertheless you should always consult your physician.

Sex

Sex life is not affected by treatment with Marevan/Waran.

Sports and exercise

Treatment with Marevan/Waran does not prevent you from taking part in sports and exercise. However, you should avoid high-impact contact sports.

Alcohol

Small amounts of alcohol – a glass of wine with your food – usually does not affect the treatment. Larger amounts or more regular use of alcohol can cause the risk of bleeding to increase.

Tobacco

Although smoking does not affect treatment with Marevan/Waran, smoking in itself increases the risk of thrombosis.

Travel

Contact your physician in good time before going abroad for a longer period in order to discuss monitoring of your treatment. Remember to take along sufficient medication for your entire sojourn. Note that Marevan/Waran (warfarin) may be sold abroad in other strengths and under a different name.

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