

# Anticoagulants (Warfarin & DOACs)

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## ■ HEADLINE: Critical Safety Warning

- Biggest trap: patient stops anticoagulant before dental treatment or surgery without telling the prescriber.
- Even one missed DOAC dose can significantly increase the risk of stroke or thrombosis.
- Never advise stopping anticoagulation without guidance from the clinician managing treatment.

## ■ FIRST DISPENSE: Mandatory Items & Checks

- Warfarin: issue yellow anticoagulant treatment booklet. Advise patient to carry it to appointments.
- DOACs: issue anticoagulant patient alert card appropriate to the medicine and local practice.
- Warfarin baseline: INR, full blood count, renal function, liver function, blood pressure.
- DOACs baseline: renal function, liver function, weight if relevant to dosing, and indication.

Script: "Never stop unless advised by the clinician managing your anticoagulation, even for dental treatment. Tell every doctor, dentist, and pharmacist. Seek urgent help if bleeding will not stop."

Drug/Food	Drug	Risk
Metronidazole, fluconazole, ciprofloxacin, trimethoprim, co-trimoxazole	Warfarin	Raised INR; check monitoring
NSAIDs / ibuprofen	Warfarin	Increased bleeding risk; avoid
St John's Wort	DOACs	Reduces levels; avoid
Ketoconazole, clarithromycin, ritonavir	DOACs	May increase bleeding risk
Heavy or binge alcohol	All	Increased bleeding risk

## ■ REPEAT DISPENSE: Screen & Monitor

- Warfarin: record INR, date, dose, target range. If INR unavailable, contact anticoagulation service first.
- DOACs: renal function at least annually. More frequent monitoring may be needed in renal impairment.
- Ask: "Any unusual bleeding such as cuts, bruising, blood in urine, or black stools?"
- Ask: "Any new medicines, antibiotics, aspirin, anti-inflammatory medicines, supplements, or herbal remedies?"
- Dental treatment and surgery: interruption only under specialist guidance.

## ■ RED FLAGS: Seek Emergency Assessment

- Vomiting or coughing blood: call 999.
- Black, tarry, or bloody stools: seek urgent emergency assessment.
- Heavy uncontrolled bleeding not stopping after 10 minutes: call 999.
- Sudden severe headache, facial drooping, arm weakness, or slurred speech: call 999.
- Significant blood in urine with clots or difficulty passing urine: seek urgent assessment.
- Sudden loss of vision in one or both eyes: call 999.

**Key reminders:** Pregnancy: warfarin is teratogenic; DOACs are generally avoided in pregnancy. Refer urgently. Falls risk: consider referral if recurrent falls. Dehydration or acute illness may increase DOAC exposure and bleeding risk.