

provider and diagnosis, but can range between 2.5-3.5. These values are frequently followed at the beginning of treatment and are tapered off to every 2-4 weeks once stable.

Observe for Bleeding

Observatory with Blood

Bleeding gums while brushing teeth or prolong bleeding when a laceration is present can indicate that the INR is elevated. Gastrointestinal bleeding may occur with patients that are taking Warfarin. Educating the patient to monitor stool color can help inform the patient when to seek medical attention.

Contraindications

Pregnancy

Caution-tape Pregnant-woman

Warfarin is contraindicated in pregnancy as it is a teratogen, an agent that causes birth defects. Patients should be educated about the importance of notifying their physician if they are pregnant or trying to become pregnant, so that an alternative medication can be prescribed, such as heparin instead of warfarin. Warfarin crosses the placenta as well as enters breast milk.

Nursing Considerations

Vitamin K and Fresh Frozen Plasma

Viking King with FFP Frozen Plasma-tv

Vitamin K (phytonadione) is the antidote for warfarin. A typical dose is 10mg in 50cc IV bag that boluses over 15 minutes. Fresh Frozen Plasma (FFP) can also be given depending on the INR level.

Prolonged Therapeutic Onset

Long On-switch

Warfarin has a prolonged time to reach therapeutic levels which usually takes 2-3 days. Remember that patients are still at risk for thrombotic events during this time and are usually administered heparin alongside warfarin until therapeutic levels are reached.

Maintain Same Diet

Same-types of Food

Educate the patient to maintain a consistent diet and to notify their provider of any dietary changes. Changes in consumption of foods high in vitamin K like green leafy vegetables may alter plasma levels of vitamin K.