

Anticoagulant / Antiplatelet medicines

Background

- Over 25,000 people die each year from blood clots

Thrombosis risk factors

- Venous thromboembolism (DVT and pulmonary embolism)
 - family history, previous clot, being overweight, being immobile, pregnancy
- Arterial thromboembolism
 - Cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk factors; smoking, high fat diet, obesity, lack of exercise, diabetes, hypertension, alcohol misuse

Indications for anticoagulants

- Treat or prevent deep vein thrombosis (DVT), pulmonary embolism, transient ischaemic attack (TIA), heart attack
- Prevent embolism in rheumatic heart disease, atrial fibrillation, after heart valve insertion
- Inherited clotting disorders

Indications for antiplatelet drugs

- Prevent arterial thromboembolism - after stroke, heart attack, acute coronary syndrome or coronary stent
- Secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease

Monitoring (anticoagulants only)

- INR range determined by clinic / GP / hospital
- Check patient has yellow booklet / card and knows to carry it with them

Counselling points

- Take with or after food to reduce GI problems
- Take at same time every day
- Missed doses – take asap; but do not take two doses on the same day
- Avoid major changes in diet – some foods affect warfarin, for example
- Avoid indigestion remedies with enteric-coated preparations

Anticoagulant / Antiplatelet medicines

Lifestyle changes

- Lifestyle changes to reduce risk factors – see separate card

NB: advise patient to speak to clinic if they modify their diet, their weight changes or they stop smoking

- Smoking cessation
- Aim for 10% weight loss if obese
- Exercise – 150 minutes per week
eg. 30 minutes five times a week
- Alcohol – no more than 1 to 2 units per day

Other support

- British Heart Foundation - www.bhf.org.uk
- Circulation Foundation - www.circulationfoundation.org.uk
- Lifeblood: The Thrombosis Charity - www.thrombosis-charity.org.uk
- Stroke Association - www.stroke.org.uk
- NHS Choices - www.nhs.uk
- Patient.co.uk - www.patient.co.uk