



Warfarin News You Can Use

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

Volume 3, Issue 3

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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: What do I do if I missed a dose of Warfarin

A: If you realized that you missed a dose, call BWH AMS immediately and either speak to a staff member or leave a message with your name, date of birth and what dose you have been taking before your missed dose. Your clinician will give you updated dosing instructions to ensure that you stay within range of your INR

Q: What drugs interact with Warfarin

A: some drugs that can interact with your warfarin include but not limited to are: antibiotics, diuretics, pain medications and any medications that contain aspirin. Some supplements that include vitamin K, such as boost and ensure, can also cause interactions, therefore, this is why it is very important to let you clinician know about your diet

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:

Gina Dube, PharmD, CACP



Hometown: Franklin, Massachusetts

Education and training: Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) and Certified Anticoagulation Care Provider (CACP).

Professional experience: Former Staff Pharmacist at Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital for 3 years. Advanced Practice Clinical Pharmacist at BWH AMS since 2010 and Inpatient Clinical Staff Pharmacist at Steward Carney Hospital.

Hobbies: Enjoy Broadway shows, enjoy watching sports (specifically Football and Baseball) and inspirational movies, love to travel around the world. Enjoy attending kids' activities. Enjoy reading, singing, listening to music, learning new things, and doing research. Volunteer as Content Creator at a local church's multimedia technology.

The best part of medicine is the human connection to patient care. Everyone deserves exceptional care, regardless of background, race or gender. My legacy is to use the knowledge and abilities GOD gave me to make a significant difference around the world. I am proud to be part of the Brigham and Women's Hospital Anticoagulation Management Service Team, we are dedicated toward "stopping clots and saving lives."



Warfarin Tip

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

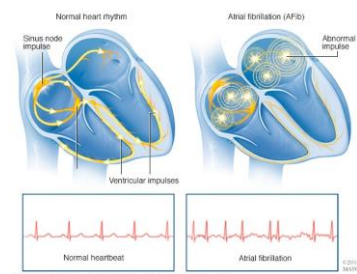


Feature Article

Atrial Fibrillation (AFib): Causes, Prevention & Treatment

What is atrial fibrillation (Afib):

Atrial Fibrillation (AF or A Fib) is the abnormal beating of the heart which can lead to heart failure, stroke and other heart-related problems. When AFib occurs, it means that the two-upper chambers of the heart (the atria) are beating out of irregularly.



AFib can occur because of long-term high blood pressure, or heart disease. Many people can develop Afib after heart surgery. One of the most dangerous consequences of Afib is stroke. An irregular heart beat can cause blood clots to form. Blood clots can travel to different parts of the body causing significant blockage of major blood vessels. Some people may show symptoms, and some may not. Possible signs of Afib include: fatigue, shortness of breath, chest pains, lightheadedness, and palpitation.

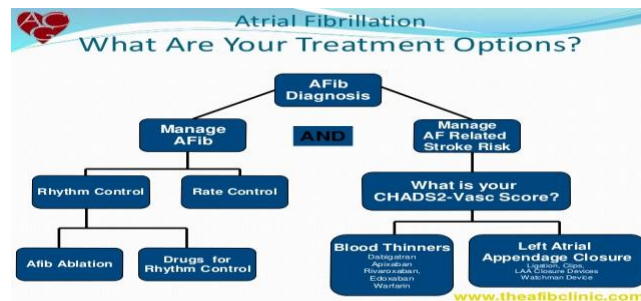
There are many factors that contribute to Afib including: high blood pressure, heart attacks, lung disease, viral infections, sleep apnea, and previous heart surgery. Living a healthy lifestyle, such as avoiding smoking, exercising regularly, avoiding excessive alcohol use, and eating healthy foods, can reduce the risk of developing Afib.

Types of AFib – all types of Afib increase a person's chances of having a stroke:

1. Paroxysmal – this is when the heart rhythm is sometimes irregular and returns on its own to a regular rhythm.
2. Persistent – this is when the heart rhythm is irregular and does not return to a normal rhythm on its own. A regular heart rhythm can be reached with treatment.
3. Permanent – this is when your normal heart rhythm cannot be restored; treatment with medication is required to control your heart rate.

Once a person is diagnosed with Afib, there are steps that must be taken to ensure that the patient's heart rhythm goes back to normal. The heart rhythm must be reset, measurements must be in place to prevent the clotting of blood and prevention of stroke.

1. The heart rhythm can be reset by either electrical shock or by medication. Either of these two measures are used depending on how long the patient has had this condition. Surgical procedures can also be done to ensure that the heart goes back to its normal rhythm.
2. Anticoagulants (sometimes referred to as blood thinners) may be prescribed for patients with Afib to prevent blood clots. Anticoagulants such as warfarin and the newer direct acting anticoagulants (apixaban, rivaroxaban, edoxaban and dabigatran) can be prescribed. These types of medications must be monitored closely to ensure they are taken correctly and there are no signs or symptoms of blood clots or bleeding.



Living a healthy lifestyle can prevent many life-threatening complications of Afib. Knowing how to protect yourself after having a life-altering event can lead to a longer happy life.

Mayo Clinic: Atrial Fibrillation
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/atrial-fibrillation/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20350630>

The American Heart Association's AFib content and awareness: What are the symptoms of Atrial Fibrillation
<http://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/atrial-fibrillation/what-are-the-symptoms-of-atrial-fibrillation-afib-or-af>

New BWH AMS Main Website coming soon
This website will be patient friendly and very easy to navigate.