



Warfarin (Coumadin[®]) Blood Test Monitoring

Why do I have to have my blood tested?

It is important to have your blood tested often while you are taking warfarin (Coumadin[®]) in order to make sure that you are taking the correct amount of medication. If you are taking too much, you will bleed too easily. If you are not taking enough, you will be at risk for more blood clots.

What is the blood test?

The special blood test to check how your blood is clotting is called the International Normalized Ratio or INR. Your doctor will check to make sure that your INR number falls within the normal range (called the therapeutic range) for you based on your health, the medicine you are taking and the reason you are taking blood thinners. If your results are not within the therapeutic range, your doctor may adjust the dose of your medicine.

What do my results mean?

Most healthy people have an INR level of 1.0. For most people who take warfarin (Coumadin[®]), the therapeutic level is usually between 2.0 and 3.0.

A lower INR number means “thicker” blood. Having an INR **BELOW** 2 means your blood is too “thick.” The thicker your blood, the higher the risk of forming blood clots.

A higher INR number means “thinner” blood. Having an INR **ABOVE** 3 means your blood is too “thin.” The thinner your blood, the higher the risk of bleeding.

Where do I go for my lab test?

INR testing is done at an outpatient lab. Your doctor will give you a prescription and instructions for testing. If you have questions, speak with your healthcare provider.

When do I have to go for my first blood test?

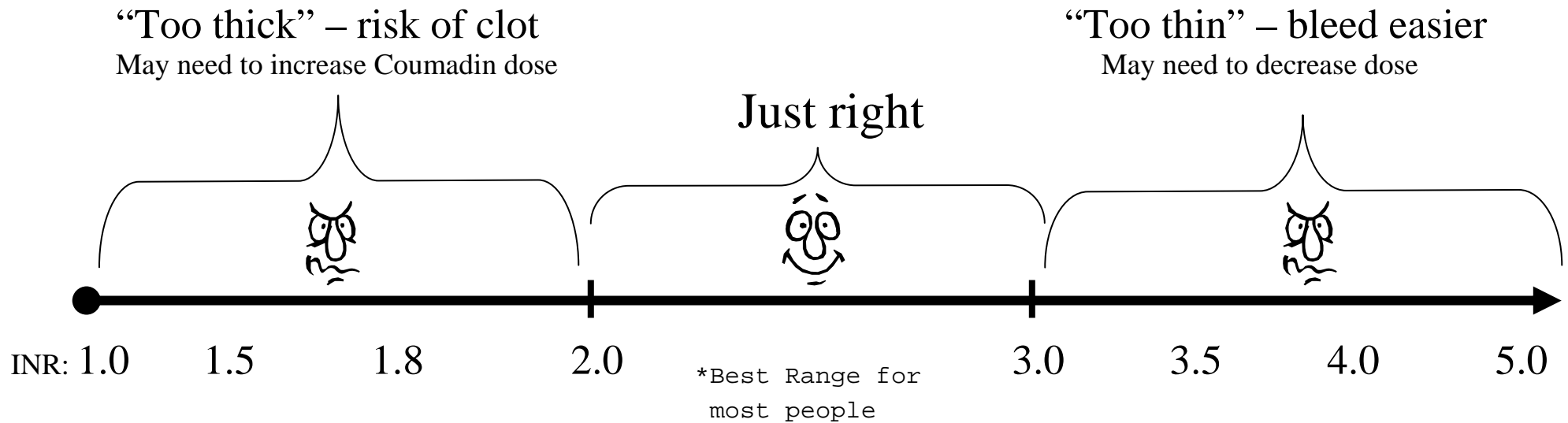
Your healthcare team will tell you when to go to the lab for your INR test. If you are new to blood thinners or are going home from the hospital, you will need to go to the lab in 3-4 days.

How often do I have to have blood tests?

At first, you will need to get an INR test done 2-3 times every week. When your INR number reaches and stays at a therapeutic level, you will be tested less often. The doctor who is monitoring your INR level will tell you how often you need to be tested. Most people are tested once or twice a month.

Where should my INR number be?

INR values show the ability of your blood to clot



Things that can make INR decrease:

- missing 1 or more doses
- extra green, leafy vegetables
- certain medications

*Your doctor will tell your therapeutic or normal range is different.

Things that can make INR increase:

- Illness
 - diarrhea
 - nausea/vomiting
 - fever > 100

} more than 2 days
- certain medications (like antibiotics)
- CHF worsening (Congestive Heart Failure)
- Increased alcohol
- Eating fewer green, leafy vegetables

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