

What if I fall or cut myself while I am taking a blood thinner?



UHN

Patient and Family Information

This information explains what to do if you fall while you are taking a blood thinner. Because this type of medicine affects the way that blood clots, falls that cause bruising or cuts can be more serious than they normally would be.

Every time you come to the hospital or see a doctor, let us know that you are taking a blood thinner and what the name of it is as the nurse or doctor will need to know.

You should consider wearing a medical alert bracelet or placing a card in your wallet that tells people you are on a blood thinner if you are unable to do so yourself.

What is a blood thinner?

A blood thinner is a common name for a type of medicine called ‘anticoagulants’. Anticoagulants are used to help stop blood clots from forming or to stop blood clots from getting bigger. Your blood thinner may be called:

Oral (pills taken by mouth)

- Warfarin
- Coumadin®
- Xarelto® (rivaroxaban)
- Elquis® (apixaban)
- Pradaxa® (dabigatran)
- Other _____

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Injectable Heparin (taken by needle):

- Enoxaparin (Lovenox[®])
- Dalteparin (Fragmin[®])
- Tinzaparin (Innohep[®])

What should I do if I fall while I am taking a blood thinner?

If you are bleeding, put pressure on any cuts or scrapes. Use a tissue or clean cloth if one is available.

- It may take up to 20 minutes for the bleeding to stop
- If the bleeding doesn't stop after 20 minutes, continue to apply pressure and go to the nearest emergency room
- **If the cut is large and bleeding heavily, use pressure and get help immediately. Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room**
- **If you go to a hospital, tell the nurse or doctor that you are taking a blood thinner**

Contact your **family doctor** immediately after a fall if you:

- hit your head or back, even if you are not bleeding or feeling pain at that time
- feel different than you normally do
- have new or worse pain after the fall
- have large or many bruises

Remind your doctor that you are taking a blood thinner

You should go to the **emergency room** if you:

- have severe back pain that lasts a long time, especially if this is new
- have sudden dizziness, weakness, trouble breathing, or chest pain
- have a severe headache that lasts a long time
- severe pain in the abdomen

Tell the nurse or doctor that you are taking a blood thinner

If you need more general information about blood thinners, please speak to your family doctor or pharmacist.