



INFLUENZA AND YOU



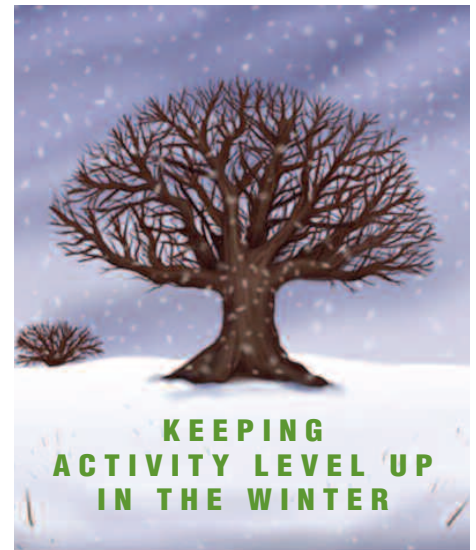
Cold and flu season will soon be upon us and this is a good time to mention a few things about the influenza vaccine, illness and your anticoagulation medication.

First of all, a virus itself can change your *international normalized ratio* (INR) and should be reported to the Anticoagulation Clinic within the first three days of onset. If you are unable to maintain your usual dietary intake because of diarrhea or vomiting, you need to report this to the Anticoagulation Clinic as soon as possible, and come in for INR approximately four to five days from the start of your illness.

Secondly, we need to talk about the influenza vaccine. If you have a history of chronic respiratory illness such as asthma, or your immune system is compromised due to chronic illness, it could put you at risk for secondary infection. For these reasons, you should be vaccinated for influenza. If you are not sure you should have the vaccine, call and talk with your primary care physician.

The vaccine itself can cause your INR to go up slightly. For example, if your INR is 2.5 the day of your vaccine, it can raise as high as mid 3.0. Have your INR checked the day you receive your vaccine. Having your INR checked will tell us if you need to be rechecked a week after receiving the vaccine.

Take good care of yourself and maintain a healthy lifestyle to stay well this winter.



Be creative in winter time with your activities. Ice will be covering walk ways soon and there goes your afternoon and evening walks.

One of the first things we ask when your INR is not in the target range is, "Is your activity level the same as it usually is?" Changes in activity can change your INR. Now is the time to think how you will maintain your activity level during the winter months. By exchanging biking or golfing with a stationary bike or a mall walk is helpful in keeping your INR stable. Cleaning out closets or storage spaces or dancing to your favorite CD or tape is another creative way to boost your activity level. Be creative to maintain your activity level during winter time to keep your stable INRs intact.

Winter Safety

Soon we'll be in the land of snow and ice, and we need to look at how we can prevent falls from slippery areas. Below are some suggestions on walking and driving on ice-covered surfaces and how to keep the ice surface manageable.

- Keep outdoor surfaces free of ice by scraping off ice and putting down rock salt to keep ice melted. This will help keep walk ways clear not only for you, but for others who visit your home daily like the letter carrier or newspaper delivery person.
- Make sure your car is supplied with a shovel, some cat litter, flares, a blanket, flashlight, jumper cables and some simple food products like granola or protein bars. Don't forget a first aid kit.
- Wear or carry something that states you are on anticoagulation medication. It can be as simple as an index card with Warfarin written in red on it, or a medic alert ID tag or bracelet. This is to alert emergency team members who may show up at the scene of an accident.

These simple suggestions can make for a safer environment and safer outings during the winter. If you have any suggestions to share, please let us know.



TAKING CARE OF THE Winter Nose!!!

It is not uncommon for people to develop nose bleeds in the winter due to dry air. People on anticoagulation who have occasional nose bleeds in the winter have a particularly different situation because they can bleed more. Here are some tips on taking care to prevent these problems and how to assess nose bleeds when they do happen.

- Keep the skin inside your nose moist during the winter when the air is very dry. You can do this by using nasal saline spray which can be purchased at a drug store for about \$2 a bottle. You can use this as often as needed.
- Use a humidifier or a cool water mister to put moisture in the air, especially in the bedroom.
- Stay hydrated by drinking the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of six to eight glasses of water or other liquid per day.



First Aid If and When You Get a Nose Bleed

Pinch your nose toward the middle just behind the nostrils. Lean with your head slightly forward and let the blood drain into a towel or bowl. Most nose bleeds come from the front of the nose. If you lean your head forward and you notice blood is running down your throat, this is more emergent.

Swallowing blood can make you nauseous so spit it out instead. Go to the emergency room as soon as possible.

If you pinch your nose for up to 30 minutes and it has not stopped bleeding or has become more profuse, go to a hospital emergency room.

Anticoagulation medication does not cause you to have nose bleeds, but you will bleed longer and possibly a lot more in volume while you are on anticoagulation.

Be careful not to blow your nose too hard and do not put anything sharp, like a fingernail or tweezers, in your nose that could break the skin. Use nasal spray to moisten the inside of your nose, then wait a few minutes then try gently blowing your nose to clear.

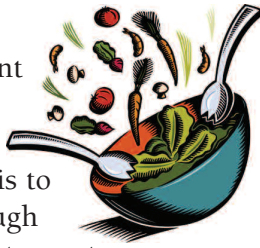
HOLIDAY TIPS

FOR STABLE INRs

Things change drastically during the holidays with all the preparation and family gatherings which make it difficult to keep your diet, activity and stress levels at a normal level. Here are a few tips to help you keep your INRs stable.

- Keep vitamin K foods consistent by incorporating a salad into the meals you are hosting. Another way to get vitamin K is to order a salad at the drive-through or at your favorite fast food restaurant while you are shopping. (Remember green M & Ms are not included on the list of foods with vitamin K in them.)
- Keeping your stress level down will help INRs stay consistent.
- Keep your goals for each day manageable and allow for enjoyable breaks. Maybe take in a school choir that performs during the day for shoppers.
- Don't accept invitations to gatherings you cannot possibly make; instead get together with friends after the holidays.
- Make time for the things you especially enjoy during the holidays. For example: see the Nutcracker at the DECC, or the Symphony. Maybe take a group of children caroling or to see Santa.
- Keep your lists short and keep your time as free as possible. For example: make three kinds of cookies instead of 10. Decorate two rooms in your home instead of all of them.
- Keep your alcohol intake down to only one or two drinks at any gathering.

We hope you find these suggestions helpful and, if you have any to add, feel free to share at your next INR appointment.



INR APPOINTMENTS

Taking an anticoagulant requires a commitment to regular testing. You can minimize any inconvenience by establishing a few routines:

- Arrive five to ten minutes prior to your appointment to register and complete the assessment sheet. Remember to allow a little extra time in the event there is a line at registration. This will allow you to get in and out of your appointment quickly.
- Before you leave the office, make sure you schedule an appointment for your next INR. Mark it on your appointment calendar.
- Check your appointment calendar routinely, for example, every Sunday evening, so that you don't miss your appointments for the week.
- If you want your INR checked on the same day you see your doctor, schedule the INR appointment at least 15 minutes prior to your doctor's appointment.
- Please call to cancel an appointment you are unable to make and reschedule another at the same time. Your cancelled time slot can then become available for another patient. Rescheduling at the same time will save a reminder call by our anticoagulation staff.
- Please call ahead if you need a same day appointment. Staff can let you know what times are open and save you from waiting unnecessarily. Scheduled patients are seen before patients who walk into the office without an appointment.
- Be sure to warm your hands if they are cold while you are waiting. You can either use a warm cup of coffee or go to the washroom and hold under warm running water.



For more information, call St. Luke's Anticoagulation Clinic at 218-249-3057.

ANTICOAGULATION

WINTER 2007

UPDATE

Hot Artichoke & Spinach Dip

Serves 12 Ready in 40 minutes

Prep Time: 15 minutes Cook Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup grated Romano cheese
- 1 clove of garlic, peeled and minced
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic salt
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 (14 ounce) can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
- 1/2 cup frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
- 1/4 cup shredded mozzarella cheese



Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 C).

Lightly grease a small baking dish.

In medium bowl, mix together cream cheese, mayonnaise, Parmesan cheese, Romano cheese, garlic, basil, garlic salt, salt and pepper.

Gently stir in artichoke hearts and spinach.

Transfer the mixture to the prepared baking dish. Top with mozzarella cheese.

Bake in the preheated oven 25 minutes until bubbly and lightly browned.

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