Instructions for Using the Coumadin (Warfarin) Slide Rule

For Target INR 2.5 - 3.5

- In the coming days, you will begin taking coumadin on a daily basis. Your coumadin dosage will be determined by a blood test, whose result is given as an INR. Please read the coumadin instruction booklet several times before reading these slide rule instructions. The instruction booklet contains explanations about coumadin, how the drug works, why you need to take it and what the INR result means.

- The slider ruler in this kit will assist you in selecting the correct weekly coumadin dosage, according to your last INR result and your last weekly dosage. This will help you reach your target INR range of 2.5 – 3.5.

- As you read in the handbook, coumadin is available in 4 strengths:

  1 mg  2 mg  2.5 mg  5 mg
  Pink  Blue  Green  Orange

- You will need to take different strengths of coumadin daily to arrive at your weekly individualized dosage. You may use all 4 strengths of coumadin pills to arrive at this weekly dosage. In order to determine if you are taking the correct weekly dosage, you will have to take a blood test, whose result is given an INR. Your target INR range is 2.5 – 3.5, which means you should aspire to an INR higher than 2.5 but lower than 3.5.
  - If your INR is lower than 2.5, you need to increase your weekly dosage (take more coumadin).
  - If your INR is higher than 3.5, you need to reduce your weekly dosage (take less coumadin).
  - If your INR is within the target range, between 2.5 – 3.5, continue the same weekly dosage (take the same amount of coumadin).

- The coumadin dosage you are currently taking is calculated as a weekly dosage. Therefore, the changes made in your dosage are changes in weekly dosage. For example, if you take a 5mg pill daily, calculate your weekly dosage as follows:

  \[
  5\text{mg daily} \times 7 \text{ days (one week)} = 35\text{mg of coumadin weekly}
  \]

Thus, your weekly coumadin dosage is 35mg.
Using the slide rule: Proper use of the slide rule will help you calculate the correct weekly dosage of coumadin, according to your last INR result.

A. Note that the slide rule has two sides:

**Side One:**

When your INR result is lower than 2
Today, you should take double the dose you took yesterday.
(Example: If you took 2mg yesterday, take 4mg today.)

When your INR result is between 2.0 – 2.4

**Side Two:**

When your INR result is between 3.6 – 4.6
When your INR result is between 4.7 – 5.2
It is advisable to skip your coumadin today.

B. As you can see, each side of the slide rule is divided into two sections. The upper section on side one reads: "When your INR result is lower than 2"
The lower section on side one reads: "When your INR result is between 2.0 – 2.4"

The upper section on side two reads: "When your INR result is between 3.6 – 4.6"

The lower section on side two reads: "When your INR result is between 4.2 – 5.2"

C. Use ONLY the section of the slide rule that applies to your last INR result. For example:

- If the INR result on your blood test was 1.8, use the section "When your INR result is lower than 2".
- If the INR result on your blood test was 2.2, use the section "When your INR result is between 2.0 – 2.4".
- If the INR result on your blood test was 3.9, use the section "When your INR result is between 3.6 – 4.6".
- If the INR result on your blood test was 4.7, use the section "When your INR result is between 4.7 – 5.2".
Comments:

1. Note that the INR range of 2.5 – 3.5 does not appear in the slide rule because it is your target range. If you get an INR result within this range (2.5 – 3.5), an INR of 2.8, for example, you do not have to make any changes in your weekly dosage. Simply continue the same weekly dosage that you are currently taking!

2. VERY IMPORTANT:
   a. When your INR is higher than 4 and most certainly when it is higher than 5, consult your doctor.
   b. When your INR is higher than 6, stop taking coumadin immediately, call your doctor, and discuss taking vitamin K on a one-time basis to counteract the coumadin. The recommended dosage of vitamin K in this situation is 1 mg. Retest your INR the following day and recommence your coumadin treatment in accordance with the results, taking a smaller dosage.

D. Find the section of the slide rule that matches your INR result. For example: "When your INR result is lower than 2". The top row in the table says "last weekly dosage" in red:

E. Slide the moveable card by pushing or pulling on the arrows in the black circles on both sides of the slide rule, until the number appearing in the window under "last weekly dosage" matches the last weekly dosage you took.
For example: if your last weekly dosage was 35mg, slide the ruler until the number 35mg appears in the window opposite "last weekly dosage" in red:

F. Under "last weekly dosage", is a column with the seven days of the week (day 1, day 2, etc.). Opposite each day is the dosage for that day that you must take.

G. The last row of the table, "new weekly dosage" appears in green. This is your new weekly dosage (the sum of the 7 daily dosages in the table). In the example below, the new weekly dosage is 42.5mg.

H. At the week's end, after taking the daily dosages listed in the table, you must have your INR measured again. According to your new INR results, select the section of the slide rule that corresponds to your INR target range (lower than 2, between 2.0 – 2.4, between 3.0 – 4.6 or between 4.7 – 5.2). However, this time, slide the ruler to 42.5mg, which is your "last weekly dosage" and not 35mg, as in the previous week. REMEMBER, you calculated your new weekly dosage last week to be 42.5mg. This number, 42.5mg, has now become your "last weekly dosage".

I. You must repeat these simple steps every week after you take your blood test and receive your INR results. According to this new result, and your last weekly dosage, determine your new weekly and daily dosages.

J. At the back of the instruction booklet you received, is a weekly diary that you can use to record the date and result of your weekly INR test, as well as your weekly and daily dosages. Photocopy the sheet and use the diary to help you monitor your progress.
If the weekly coumadin dosage that you are currently taking deviates from the range of the slide rule, it is recommended that you use the Excel computer program than can be downloaded from this website in the "Projects" section under "Safer Oral Anticoagulation":

http://www.hadassah.org.il/departments/quality

In Summary:

1. Read the "Instruction Booklet for Use of the Anticoagulant Drug Coumadin" and the instructions for use of the coumadin slide rule THOROUGHLY.

2. Your understanding of the booklet's contents and the slide rule instructions, together with the cooperation and guidance of your physician, will help you to balance your coumadin dosage, prevent undesirable complications, improve your health and quality of life.

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