

to clot or not to clot

by marie forsz



Community Hospital has a new clinic with a “big name” that plays an equally big role in the health and well-being of patients who need to use blood-thinning medications or anticoagulants. The Anticoagulation Clinic of Community Hospital in Munster provides the education, consultation and medication monitoring necessary for proper blood therapy management.

Many people need to take anticoagulation medications, such as Coumadin®, or warfarin, to help prevent excess blood clotting. People who have illnesses that damage the lungs, heart or arteries are at greater risk for blood clots, which can easily form in or travel to the heart, lungs or brain, obstruct blood flow, and become life-threatening.

Patients who have had blood clots in the legs (called deep vein thrombosis) or in the lungs (called pulmonary embolus) require blood-thinning medications as treatment or as a preventive measure. Anticoagulants may also be prescribed by a physician if the patient has heart problems, artificial heart valves or an irregular heartbeat, called atrial fibrillation. Studies have shown that those with the heart condition called atrial fibrillation are at higher risk for stroke. Anticoagulation therapy can reduce this risk by about 60 percent in men and 84 percent in women.

These medications can be a little tricky however, as getting blood levels accurate takes some work. It’s easy to throw off levels by eating certain foods, when people get sick or as a result of using other medications. Close monitoring and continuing patient education helps to avoid over-anticoagulation,

which can result in bleeding, or under-anticoagulation, which can cause harmful blood clots. Frequent monitoring helps to ensure that the time required for blood to clot stays within a goal range.

People who need medication adjustments on a fairly regular basis can benefit from the convenient services provided by the anticoagulation clinic, such as rapid protime/INR test results and counseling regarding food/drug interactions. Patients receiving treatment from the clinic must have a physician’s referral.

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The team of pharmacists at The Anticoagulation Clinic of Community Hospital works in collaboration with a referring physician to provide close supervision for effectiveness of anticoagulation therapy. To schedule an appointment, call **219-852-3784**. 