Information for patients about Anticoagulation Clinics

What is anticoagulation?

Anticoagulation is the slowing down of the process of coagulation (blood clotting) using special medicines. Sometimes a drug called Tinzaparin is injected, but, more usually, taking Warfarin is the preferred way. Another tablet called Phenidione is sometimes used as an alternative to Warfarin.

Why do I need anticoagulation?

There are two possible reasons. The first reason is that you may already have had a blood clot. In this case, your doctor wants you to take anticoagulant tablets to reduce the danger of further blood clots forming.

The second possibility is that you have a disorder that might lead to blood clotting. For example, this might be an inherited condition, heart valve defect/replacement or maybe an irregular heartbeat. Again, anticoagulant tablets are the usual treatment.

Why do I need to come to the clinic?

The tablets can interact with other common medicines and herbal remedies and even with alcohol and some foods. For your safety, it is very important that we should see you and test your blood regularly to check that your blood is the right thickness. The result shows us if you are taking the correct amount of anticoagulant. We can make any adjustments that are necessary if your result is not quite right.

Types of Clinic

The Anticoagulation Service in Gateshead operates four types of clinic:

- **Stabilisation Clinic** – These clinics are for patients who require close monitoring or have recently started on anticoagulant tablets (Monday afternoon, Tuesday morning, Wednesday morning and Friday Morning).

- **Hospital Stable Clinic** – This clinic is for patients stable on anticoagulant tablets who wish to attend the hospital for monitoring (Thursday morning).

- **GP Stable Clinic** – These clinics are for patients stable on anticoagulant tablets who wish to attend their GP Practice or one close by for monitoring (specific day for each GP Practice).

- **Home Patient Clinic** – This clinic is reserved for patients who are stable on Warfarin and are unable to attend clinics because they are housebound.
Is there a standard dose of anticoagulant tablets that everyone can take?

No. There is no standard dose. Everybody needs their own specific, personal dose. This is why careful monitoring is required.

What happens in the anticoagulation clinic?

The first person you meet in the clinic is the receptionist. He/she will book you in. Next, you will be called to have a blood test. Usually, we can do this from a drop of blood from a finger. Sometimes we need to take some blood (about a teaspoonful) from a vein in your arm. We will then advise you on your anticoagulant dosing and your next appointment date, at hospital clinics this may sometimes we done by another member of staff.

What to do if I can’t come for a clinic appointment or miss a clinic appointment?

If you cannot attend an appointment for any reason please contact us on 0191 445 2317 to rearrange a date for a new appointment. If you attend your GP Clinic for monitoring please also contact them to arrange the actual time for your new appointment.

If you miss a clinic appointment we will automatically send you a letter asking you to arrange a new appointment.

I come by ambulance to my clinic appointments, what do I do if my ambulance does not turn up?

If for any reason there is a problem with your ambulance booking please contact us on 0191 445 2317 or contact the Ambulance Service direct on 0191 264 8870 and we will be able to provide further advice. Please note we may not be able to answer the telephone immediately so please leave a message on the answer phone and someone will contact you that day once the clinic has finished with further advice.

Who should I contact in an emergency?

In an emergency (e.g. unexplained bleeding or bruising) you should obtain advice from your GP or the nearest Accident & Emergency Department.

Further Information

When you started on your anticoagulant you will have been given an “Oral Anticoagulant Therapy Information Pack” This provides information on the side-effects of anticoagulant tablets and a book where you should record you current dose and blood results.

Contact Information

Anticoagulant Services
Pharmacy Department
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust
Gateshead NE9 6SX
Tel: 0191 445 2317
(24 hr Voicemail service – please leave a message if member of staff is not available to take your call. We pick me messages each afternoon Mon-Fri and aim to deal with your enquiry the same day).

My clinic is: ______________________

Telephone number for appointment times: ______________________

Data Protection
Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to be shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible.

In order to assist us improve the services available your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews. Further information is available in the leaflet Disclosure of Confidential Information IL137, via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website or the PALS Service.

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