

Important Information for Patients taking Blood-thinning Medication

Blood-thinners (“anticoagulants”) are prescribed to prevent life-threatening blood clots from forming in people who are at risk. One of the side-effects of anticoagulants is an increase in bleeding. Patients who take blood thinners, such as aspirin, Coumadin, Plavix or Lovenox present difficult challenges when surgery is needed.

Bleeding is a potential complication of any surgical procedure. People who take blood-thinning medicine around the time of their procedure are more likely to have bleeding complications during and after surgery. For operations in and around the eye, this bleeding may in rare cases, cause loss of vision or blindness.

If you stop taking your blood-thinner(s) before surgery to lessen the chance of bleeding, you will be at greater risk of developing a life-threatening blood clot (heart attack, stroke, pulmonary embolism, deep vein thrombosis). If, on the other hand, you continue your anticoagulants you are then at increased risk of bleeding complications. ***If you are on blood-thinners and need to have surgery, you must be willing to accept the increased risk of one of these complications—blood clot or bleeding.***

Your surgeon and your primary doctor/cardiologist will weigh the relative risks and benefits of stopping or continuing your medications before surgery and counsel you accordingly. This may mean in some cases that elective surgery will be postponed or cancelled.

Blood-thinning medication is a powerful tool to prevent complications of heart disease and has proven benefit in preventing heart attacks, strokes and other life-threatening blood clots. The benefits of these drugs must always be weighed against bleeding risks, particularly in patients undergoing elective surgical procedures.

There is always a chance that you may develop a complication related to how your blood thinners are managed around the time of your surgery. Your doctors will help you understand the relative risks involved so you can make an informed decision about how to proceed.

Anticoagulation (“blood thinners”) and Surgery Consent Form

As a patient on blood-thinners (aspirin, Plavix, Coumadin, Lovenox), I understand that stopping these medicines before surgery may increase my risk of a having a heart attack, stroke or other life-threatening blood clot. I also understand that if I continue my blood-thinners, I have an increased risk of bleeding complications that may result, in rare cases, in vision loss or blindness.

Patient signature

Date