

# Brodifacoum Poisoning: What You Need to Know

## Frequently Asked Questions for Patients

### What is brodifacoum poisoning?

Brodifacoum (bro-DIF-ah-kuhm) is a rat poison that is related to the medication warfarin, but is much stronger. Warfarin is used to treat conditions where your blood clots too much. Brodifacoum can prevent your blood from clotting at all, which is dangerous.

### What happens to your body with brodifacoum poisoning?

If you have brodifacoum poisoning, your blood will have difficulty forming clots. This means that you may bleed a lot even from small injuries.

For example, a paper cut may bleed for hours, you may get a large bruise from a small bump, or you may have painless blood in your urine. Treatment prevents dangerous bleeding.

### What is the treatment?

Brodifacoum poisoning is treated with high doses of vitamin K. The doses of vitamin K are much higher than those in a supplement that you would get over-the-counter at a pharmacy, and also much higher than doses used to treat other conditions.

Vitamin K does not take the brodifacoum out of your blood, but it prevents you from bleeding while your body heals itself naturally. You will probably need to take

### Common symptoms of brodifacoum poisoning:

- Blood in your urine or stool
- Bleeding gums
- Bruising
- Coughing or vomiting blood

If you have any of these symptoms, you should call 911 or have someone take you immediately to the emergency department.

vitamin K for several months before your body can clot normally again. There are no side effects to taking vitamin K.

### How do you know if the treatment is working?

When you start taking vitamin K, your symptoms will go away. Your doctor will need to check a laboratory test called an INR (international normalized ratio), which tests how well your blood clots. This test will be done every week to make sure you receive the right dose. It is important for your doctor to test your INR regularly during treatment. You could be at risk for bleeding even if you are not currently having symptoms.

## What should you do if you run out of vitamin K?

If you run out of vitamin K, there are a few options:

- Contact your primary care physician for a new prescription.
- If you do not have a primary care physician, you may have been assigned one in the hospital. Check your discharge paperwork and call the physician listed.
- If you have insurance, you can call the number on the back of your insurance card to find a physician in network.
- If you do not have insurance, contact a federally qualified health center (FQHC) in your area.
- Go to the Emergency Department for a new prescription.

**If you do not have vitamin K for even a few days, you could be at risk for bleeding. Plan ahead!**

Not all pharmacies have large amounts of vitamin K on hand. If you only have 5-10 days of medicine left, call your pharmacy to order more.

## What if the pharmacy can not fill the prescription?

Some pharmacies may not have enough vitamin K on hand to fill your prescription right away. Call ahead, because they may need to order more.

## What if you can't afford vitamin K?

There are options to help if you cannot afford vitamin K. Options include:

- If you do not have insurance, you may be able to apply for BadgerCare.
- You may qualify for discounted medication through the Valeant Pharmaceuticals patient assistance program (833-862-VPAP).
- Some FQHCs and hospitals have medication assistance programs.

You will need to work with your doctor, case manager, or social worker to find the one that fits your situation.

## Where can you find more information on brodifacoum poisoning?

Contact the Wisconsin Poison Control Center if you have questions about brodifacoum poisoning, or any other poisonings, at:

**1-800-222-1222**

**Wisconsin Department of Health Services**

Division of Public Health

[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/chemical/synthetic-cannabinoids.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/chemical/synthetic-cannabinoids.htm)

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