

Vitamin K Regulated Diet

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Purpose

Vitamin K is essential for the proper formation of blood clots in the body. The K in vitamin K, which was discovered by a Danish scientist, comes from the Danish word, koagulering, which means "clotting."

The liver makes a protein called prothrombin, which is a vital link in the clotting process. Vitamin K is used by the liver to make prothrombin. There are a number of medical conditions in which prevention of excessive clotting within the body is desirable.

Blood clots within the heart, arteries and veins can lead to heart attacks, strokes and phlebitis. One of the drugs used to prevent clot formation is a blood thinner called warfarin (trade name Coumadin). Warfarin interferes with the formation of prothrombin in the liver. As everyone who takes warfarin knows, they must get a blood test called a prothrombin time (pro time or P.T.) to be sure of the correct dose of warfarin. Too much warfarin leads to unwanted bleeding. Too little means that clotting is not prevented.

So why is vitamin K in the diet important to a patient on warfarin therapy? Simply because if too much vitamin K is eaten, it interferes with the action of warfarin, thus lowering the P.T. and making the blood more likely to clot.



Nutrition Facts

The recommended dietary allowance for vitamin K is 65 micrograms (mcg) for women and 80 mcg for men. Some of the vitamin K the body uses is produced by bacteria in the digestive tract, but most comes from food. With proper food selection, a vitamin K-regulated diet can be varied and adequate in all nutrients.

Special Considerations

While taking anti-clotting medications, it is not necessary to avoid vitamin K-containing foods altogether. Just keep consumption of vitamin K fairly consistent, rather than consuming a lot one day and very little the next. This will allow the medication to work and keep blood clotting function consistent. Regular blood tests to monitor blood clotting time for potential dangerous fluctuations is important. Keeping a food diary can be very helpful in monitoring the potential interaction between diet and medication. If the P.T. becomes too low, check with the physician and keep a record of your own food intake. It may be you are eating too much of vitamin K-containing foods.

Foods High in Vitamin K

The foods highest in vitamin K are green leafy vegetables

Food	Vitamin K micrograms
Kale, 1 c. raw	540
Cutting board, 1 c. raw	500

Swiss chard, 1 c. raw	500
Collard greens, 1/2 c. cooked	440
Spinach, 1/2 c. cooked	360
Brussels sprouts, 5 sprouts	289
Watercress, 3 c. raw	250
Endive, 2 c. raw chopped	231
Scallion, raw, 2/3 c. chopped	207
Broccoli, 1/2 c. cooked	113
Coleslaw with dressing, 3/4 c.	100
Cabbage, 2/3 c. cooked	98
Asparagus, 7 spears, cooked	80

Sample Menu

Breakfast

- orange juice 1/2 cup
- oatmeal 1 cup
- whole wheat toast 2 slices
- butter 1 tsp
- sugar 1 tsp
- skim milk 1 cup
- banana 1 med

Lunch

- spaghetti with marinara sauce 1 1/2 cups
- jello salad 1/2 cup
- Italian bread 1 slice
- butter 1 tsp
- apple 1 med
- grape juice 1/2 cup
- skim milk 1 cup

Dinner

- broiled chicken breast 3 oz.
- pasta salad 3 oz
- green peas 1/2 cup
- whole wheat roll 1
- pumpernickel bread 1 slice
- butter 1 tsp
- peach cobbler 1/2 cup
- skim milk 1/2 cup

Snack

- apple 1 med

This Sample Diet Provides the Following

Calories	1964	Fat	41 gm
Protein	84 gm	Sodium	66 mg
Carbohydrates	324 gm	Fiber	27 gm

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