What is anticoagulation?

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What is anticoagulation?

- Your doctor has prescribed an anticoagulant medicine. These are sometimes called “blood thinners”.

- “Anti” means against and “coagulant” refers to the blood clotting. An anticoagulant helps keep clots from forming in your blood.

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A number of anticoagulants are available:

- **Coumadin® (warfarin)**
- **Eliquis® (apixaban)**
- **Pradaxa® (dabigatran)**
- **Xarelto® (rivaroxaban)**
- **Savaysa® (edoxaban)**

**Coumadin® (warfarin)** is the most commonly used anticoagulant. For further information, please refer to the **Coumadin® (warfarin) Patient Education Toolkit**.
Why am I taking an anticoagulant?

Your doctor has prescribed one of the anticoagulants for you to take to keep harmful blood clots from forming. Many conditions can cause blood clots to form. For example, they can occur in people who have a heart condition called atrial fibrillation.
Many things happen inside the body for a blood clot to form. Natural parts of the blood called clotting factors are involved in each step of the process.

Anticoagulants work to block one or more of these clotting factors.
How long will I be taking an anticoagulant?

Ask your anticoagulation provider how long you will need to take the anticoagulation medication.

Some people may need to take an anticoagulant life long. For example, a patient with a mechanical heart valve replacement.

Some patients may only need it for a short while, for example those with a blood clot in their leg, due to immobility.
Where should I store my medication?

- Place your medicine bottle in a cool dry place.
- Keep it away from where children and pets can get to it.