

Warfarin and other blood thinners – reminder on safe use during COVID-19 pandemic

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), which is the UK regulator for medicines and medical devices, has issued [advice to healthcare professionals and patients](#) on the monitoring of patients taking blood thinning tablets (also known as anticoagulants) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Anticoagulant medicines work to reduce your risk of developing blood clots.

The advice includes a reminder for doctors to continue regular blood tests in patients taking warfarin or any other vitamin K antagonist (such as acenocoumarol ('Sinthrome') or phenindione ('Dindevan')) and who have developed an additional illness. The blood test will indicate if you need to change the dose of your anticoagulant. In particular, it is important these regular blood tests are done in any patients with symptoms of COVID-19 or who have tested positive so that they can be given the right care at an early stage to reduce the risk of bleeding. It is therefore important that you or your carers let your GP and anticoagulation clinic know if you have tested positive for COVID-19 or are ill with COVID-19 symptoms (high temperature, new continuous cough, loss of sense of smell or taste).

The advice also includes a reminder of the potential for drug interactions between some anticoagulant tablets and medicines used to treat infections, for example antivirals or antibiotics (such as doxycycline, amoxicillin or clarithromycin, which may interact with warfarin or other vitamin K antagonists). Other anticoagulants tablets (including apixaban ('Eliquis'), dabigatran ('Pradaxa'), edoxaban ('Lixiana') or rivaroxaban ('Xarelto')) can also interact with certain medicines. These drug interactions can potentially increase the blood-thinning effect of some anticoagulants and lead to a higher risk of bleeding. You can find further information on these interactions in the patient information leaflet which accompanies each pack of medicine.

If you are taking warfarin or any other vitamin K antagonist, it is important to be consistent with what you eat and drink because this may affect how well this medicine works. You should not drink large amounts of alcohol while taking warfarin or any other vitamin K antagonist. Always take the daily dosage at the same time of day swallowed whole with a glass of water.

Additionally, you or your carers should let your GP and anticoagulation clinic know if you:

- have sickness or diarrhoea or have lost your appetite;
- have started taking any new medicines, including antibiotics, antivirals, over the counter medicines, herbal remedies or vitamin supplements;

- have recently stopped smoking or are drinking more, or less, alcohol than usual;
- are taking warfarin or any other vitamin K antagonist and are unable to attend your next scheduled blood test for any reason, including because you feel unwell.

It is important that you follow the directions of your healthcare team and do not suddenly stop taking or alter the dosage of your prescribed medications unless told to do so.

If you have any questions or concerns relating to this information about warfarin or other oral anticoagulants you should talk to your doctor.

Sarah Branch, Director of Vigilance and Risk Management of Medicines, said:

Patient safety is our main priority and it is important that patients taking blood thinners continue to be monitored carefully as we all coordinate responses to COVID-19. We are working closely with other healthcare partners to protect public health in the UK. Please continue to follow NHS COVID-19 advice and communicate with your GP and healthcare team to manage your treatment.

[New funding awarded to improve support for victims of terrorism](#)

New funding will be provided to improve the services which support victims of terrorism, the Home Office has announced today (Tuesday, 13 October).

£500,000 will be split equally between 4 successful bidders following the conclusion of a [competitive fund which was announced by the Home Secretary](#) in March.

Victim Support, South London and Maudsley NHS Trust, Cruse Bereavement Care and the Peace Foundation will each receive £125,000 to provide advice and support to those who have been affected by terrorist attacks.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

I am determined to make sure that victims of terrorism receive the support they deserve, as soon as they need it.

This new funding is so important to provide more care and specialist advice to those up and down the country who have suffered trauma as a result of terrorism.

Bidders to the fund will now draw on their expertise to provide a range of specialist advice and support to individuals who have experienced a terrorist attack, either in the UK or abroad.

Victim Support will run a 24-hour assessment service which will ensure each person receives tailored help after being impacted by terrorism.

Diana Fawcett, Chief Executive, Victim Support said:

We know for those affected, terror attacks can have a significant and often life-changing impact.

Support is vital from the immediate aftermath of an incident, and we welcome this funding that will enable us to further strengthen the range of specialist support services that we provide to survivors.

South London and Maudsley NHS Trust will provide specialist clinical mental health screening and therapy.

David Bradley, Chief Executive, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust said:

We are pleased this funding will enable us to offer vital specialist care and support to people who have been affected by a terror incident.

We know people are resilient but traumatic events can have a lasting impact – we want to help people who may be struggling to cope and who may benefit from professional mental health support.

Cruse Bereavement will provide specialist bereavement support for victims who would not otherwise be eligible through the existing homicide service, such as witnesses and first responders.

Steven Wibberley, CEO, Cruse Bereavement Care said:

This vital funding will enable us to provide expert bereavement support to victims of terrorism, immediately at the scene and long term.

This is a crucial step forward to recognise the complex needs of those affected by such traumatic events.

The Peace Foundation's UK-wide service will focus on providing a long-term peer support network for victims of terrorism, connecting them to others who have had similar experiences.

Nick Taylor, Chief Executive, The Peace Foundation said:

Over 2 decades we have developed a unique peer-to-peer approach to help people share their experiences, receive specialist advice, and improve health and wellbeing.

This Home Office funding is welcome and helps secure the Peace Foundation service and, along with the other victim support partner organisations, will strengthen the support available for those people affected by terrorism.

Today's announcement is part of the Home Secretary's efforts to improve support for victims of terrorism and follows a [commitment](#) to carry out a comprehensive internal review of the support available.

[Ethnic minority communities and the elderly called upon to bolster the fight against coronavirus](#)

- 270,000 people across the UK have signed up to participate in vital COVID-19 vaccine studies – but thousands more needed
- researchers are specifically calling on more people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds to take part in clinical trials to ensure COVID-19 vaccines work for all
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are currently under-represented in trials, along with vulnerable groups such as those with chronic diseases and over 65s

Researchers are today (Tuesday 13 October) calling on more people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds and the over 65s to volunteer for clinical studies through the [NHS Vaccine Registry](#) to ensure potential candidates work for all.

Currently, ethnic minorities are under-represented in vaccine clinical trials taking place across the UK. Of the 270,000 people who have already signed up to the NHS Registry, only 11,000 volunteers are from Asian and British Asian backgrounds, and just 1,200 are Black, African, Caribbean or Black British. This is in contrast to 93% people from non-ethnic minority groups that have already signed up.

Large-scale clinical studies with a diverse pool of volunteers will help researchers better understand the effectiveness of each vaccine candidate. With 6 different COVID-19 vaccines currently progressing in the UK, including

the University of Oxford/Astrazeneca and US biotech company Novavax candidates, thousands of people from different ages and backgrounds are urgently needed to help speed up their development and ensure they work effectively for the whole population.

This includes people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19. According to Public Health England, people from Black backgrounds are statistically more likely to be diagnosed with COVID-19, while death rates are higher for Black and Asian ethnic groups.

In addition, other vulnerable groups such as people with chronic diseases or over the age of 65 years are needed to take part in trials and also being urged to volunteer for clinical trials.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

Coronavirus can affect anyone regardless of their background, age or race. To ensure we can find a safe and effective vaccine that works for everyone, we all need to get involved.

That's why we are urging more people to support our incredible scientists and join the 270,000 people who have already signed-up so we can speed up efforts to find a vaccine to defeat this virus once and for all.

Minister for Equalities Kemi Badenoch, who is volunteering for COVID-19 vaccine trials being conducted by US biotechnology company Novavax at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, London, said:

The UK is leading the world in the search for a Covid-19 vaccine. At home, we have to ensure every community trusts a future vaccine to be safe and that it works across the entire population.

But with less than half a percent of people on the NHS Vaccine Registry from a Black background, we have a lot more work to do.

That is why I am urging more people from the ethnic minority backgrounds to join me in signing up to the NHS Vaccine Registry and taking part in a trial. Together we can be part of the national effort to end this pandemic for good.

The [NHS Vaccine Registry](#) was launched in July to create a database of people who can be contacted by the NHS to take part in clinical studies, to speed up the development of a safe and effective vaccine.

The Registry has been developed by the government, in partnership with the NIHR, NHS Digital, the Scottish and Welsh governments and the Northern Ireland Executive.

People who volunteer may be approached by researchers to discuss taking part in research studies in the UK.

Chair of the Government's Vaccine Taskforce, Kate Bingham said:

The only way to check how well a coronavirus vaccine works is to carry out large-scale clinical trials involving thousands of people. Researchers need data from different communities and different people to improve understanding of the vaccines. The only way to get this is through large clinical trials.

We want to ensure the data we get actually represents the different people from different backgrounds in the UK. This includes people who are over 65, frontline healthcare workers, or have existing health conditions, and we need people from the communities which have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds.

Dr Maheshi Ramasamy, Consultant in Infectious Diseases and Acute General Medicine and Principal Investigator at the Oxford Vaccine Group said:

We know that people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately affected by COVID in terms of severe disease and mortality. So when we do have a vaccine that we roll out to the general population, it's really important that we can demonstrate to people from these communities that we have evidence that the vaccine works.

Dr Anna Goodman, a consultant in infectious diseases at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, who is leading the Novavax study at the Trust said:

We are privileged to work in such a research active trust serving such a diverse local population. The Novavax vaccine trial is one of several trials of Urgent Public Health importance in COVID-19 that we are currently running.

Finding effective vaccines to prevent coronavirus (COVID-19) is key to our global efforts to control the spread of this disease.

Having participants in our COVID-19 trials who come from a range of backgrounds gives us the best possible chance of ensuring the findings of trials apply to everyone. We are hugely grateful to the Minister and all the other participants who are taking part in all of these research trials at Guy's and St Thomas'.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic participation in vaccine research is explored in detail in the latest podcast in the series COVID-19: the search

for a vaccine.

The UK public can support the national effort to speed up vaccine research and receive more information about volunteering for clinical studies by visiting the [NHS website](#).

Notes to editors

Public Health England's report on [Disparities in the Risk and Outcomes of Covid-19](#).

The Office for National Statistics has reported that people of black ethnicity were 1.9 times more likely to die from a COVID-19 related death than those of white ethnicity. Bangladeshi and Pakistani men were 1.8 times more likely to have a COVID-19 related death than white men, and for women the figure was 1.6 times more likely. Read [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) related deaths by ethnic group, England and Wales: 2 March 2020 to 10 April 2020](#) from the Office of National Statistics for more information.

The podcast COVID-19 – the search for a vaccine is available on Spotify, Apple podcasts, and other platforms.

Volunteering for COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials

People wishing to volunteer to support clinical trials can sign up for information on COVID-19 vaccine trials with the NHS COVID-19 vaccine research registry, developed in partnership with NHS Digital. It is helping large numbers of people to be recruited into trials rapidly over the coming months – potentially meaning an effective vaccine for coronavirus can be found as soon as possible.

The service was commissioned as part of the UK government's [Vaccine Taskforce](#) in conjunction with the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh Governments.

Anyone living in the UK can [sign up online](#) to take part in the trials through the NHS, giving permission for researchers to contact you if they think you're a good fit. Once you sign up, you can withdraw at any time and request that your details be removed from the COVID-19 vaccine research registry. The process takes about 5 minutes to complete.

More information can be found on the [NHS website](#).

About the Vaccine Taskforce

The Vaccine Taskforce (VTF) was set up under the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in May 2020, to ensure that the UK population has access to clinically effective and safe vaccines as soon as possible, while working with partners to support international access to successful vaccines. This is to place the UK at the forefront of global vaccine research, development, manufacture and distribution.

The Vaccine Taskforce comprises a dedicated team of private sector industry professionals and officials from across government who are working at speed to build a portfolio of promising vaccine candidates that can end the global pandemic. It is chaired by biotech and life sciences expert Kate Bingham, who was appointed by the Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The Vaccine Taskforce's approach to securing access to vaccines is through:

- procuring the rights to a diverse range of promising vaccine candidates to spread risk and optimise chances for success
- providing funding for clinical studies, diagnostic monitoring and regulatory support to rapidly evaluate vaccines for safety and efficacy
- providing funding and support for manufacturing scale-up and fill and finish at risk so that the UK has vaccines produced at scale and ready for administration should any of these prove successful

[Rough sleepers to be helped to keep safe this winter](#)

- Government announces £10 millions Cold Weather Payment for councils to help to keep rough sleepers safe this winter
- Additional £2 million will go to faith and community groups to help them get rough sleepers into accommodation
- This is on top of over half a billion pounds the government is already spending to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping this year alone
- Guidance on safely reopening shelters to save lives will also be published

Rough sleepers and those at risk of becoming homeless will be helped to keep safe this winter through a package of support, Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced today (13 October 2020). This will give local areas the tools and funding they need to protect people from life-threatening cold weather and the risks posed by coronavirus.

Today's announcement includes:

- A new £10 million Cold Weather Fund to support councils get rough sleepers off the streets during the winter by helping them to provide more self-contained accommodation.
- An additional £2 million for faith and community groups to help them provide secure accommodation for rough sleepers.
- Comprehensive guidance to the sector, produced with Public Health England, Homeless Link and Housing Justice to help shelters open more safely, where not doing so would endanger lives.

These measures will help councils build on their existing plans to protect

people over winter which have been supported by the £266 million Next Step Accommodation Programme – the aim of which is to keep people safe and ensure that as few people as possible return to the streets.

Communities Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

“As we approach winter, we are focusing on the best way to protect rough sleepers from the cold weather and coronavirus.

“The funding and guidance I’m announcing today will mean that working with councils and community groups, some of the most vulnerable people in society are given support and a safe place to stay this winter.

“The government is spending over half a billion pounds to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping this year alone and working with our partners, some of the most vulnerable people in our society have been helped into accommodation or other support during the pandemic and we are accelerating plans for thousands of new homes.”

Kelly Tolhurst, Minister for Housing and Rough Sleeping said:

Winter is clearly a dangerous time for people who sleep rough. These extra measures will help to protect this vulnerable group from life-threatening cold weather, as well as the risk of contracting COVID-19, and also provide them with support into move-on accommodation.

The work councils, providers, and the NHS has done since the start of the pandemic has saved lives and through this extra funding we will continue help them to rebuild their lives, part of our commitment to end rough sleeping for good.

Kathy Mohan from Housing Justice said:

Cold weather shelters in this country are predominantly staffed by volunteers and often operate on tiny budgets. These are people motivated purely by the desire not to walk by on the other side of the street while someone is affected by homelessness in their community. During the first wave of the pandemic shelters reacted phenomenally, working around the clock until they were able to safely transfer guests to self-contained accommodation.

We are pleased the Night Shelter Operating Principles are here and more than 150 organisations who provided night shelters in the last year have the facts they need to make tough decisions on their operations this winter.

Rick Henderson, Chief Executive of Homeless Link, comments:

People should not be facing a choice between the cold streets or an unsafe night shelter. Traditional night shelters should only open as a last resort if self-contained accommodation is not a possibility.

We welcome the operating principles published today, which will help make shelters open as safely as possible if they do become a necessity. We ask that local areas adhere to these principles in order that people sleeping rough can be supported safely in line with COVID-19 guidance.

We welcome the new £2 million Transformation Fund, which we will be administering to provide funding to voluntary and community sector groups to transform spaces and make more self-contained emergency accommodation locations available. This funding will be essential to groups that usually operate on extremely tight budgets, enabling them to provide appropriate support for people sleeping rough over the winter.

During the pandemic, the government has worked closely with local authorities and charitable organisations to offer vulnerable people safe accommodation and support. This year, the government has committed half a billion pounds for rough sleeping and homelessness. Allocations for 3,300 additional homes this year for rough sleepers across the country will also be announced soon, giving people a place to call their own, and to rebuild their lives away from the streets, part of the government's commitment to end rough sleeping once and for all.

Public Health England, Homeless Link, Housing Justice, councils and representatives from the shelter sector have been involved in developing the shelter operating principles, so that if shelters do reopen, they can do so as safely as possible, providing communal facilities only if there is no other alternative.

- The Cold Weather Fund was first launched in 2018. The fund was used to enhance accommodation provision such as access to the private rented sector, provide space in existing supported housing projects and fund more emergency accommodation for rough sleepers. These aim to quickly support vulnerable people off the streets through the winter.
- The government has made clear that no one should be without a roof over their head, which is why we have committed to end rough sleeping within this Parliament. This demonstrates our commitment to supporting the most vulnerable in society.
- We have provided £4.8 billion to help councils to manage the impacts of COVID-19, which includes their work to support homeless people, including £3.7 billion which is not ringfenced, and over £1.1 billion specifically to support social care providers.

- Also, we have accelerated plans – backed by £433 million over the next four years – which will deliver 6,000 additional homes for former rough sleepers across the country.
- On 18 July, we launched the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP). This makes available the financial resources needed to support councils and their partners to prevent these people from returning to the streets. The NSAP is made up of 2 sources of funding: £161 million to deliver 3,300 units of longer term move-on accommodation within the next 12 months (part of the £433 million total); and on 17 September we announced the allocation of £92 million of funding to pay for interim support to ensure that people do not return to the streets.
- The Greater London Authority has received an NSAP allocation of £19 million which is specifically designed to support the move on of people and to provide some “off the street” accommodation options for people currently sleeping rough.
- We are supporting these efforts as part of our landmark commitment – backed by over half a billion pounds this year – to break the cycle of homelessness and end rough sleeping for good.
- See further information on the [night shelter operating principles](#).

[Proposed UN programme plan and budget for 2021](#)

Mr Chair,

Thank you to the Secretary-General for joining us today to introduce his proposed programme budget for 2021. I would also like to thank the ACABQ and the Committee for Programme and Coordination for their work reviewing it and for providing their recommendations to the Fifth Committee ahead of its consideration of the proposed budget.

As the United Nations celebrates its 75th anniversary, the demands and expectations of the Organisation to tackle the diverse and significant international challenges are greater than ever. Member States have a duty to the United Nations and the people it serves to ensure that the Organisation has the right level of resource needed to carry out all the mandates given to it by us, in particular in support of the 2030 Agenda.

We will evaluate the budget proposals carefully to ensure that programmes will use resources efficiently and effectively; are using innovation, data and continuous improvement to best effect; and have a clear focus on delivering actual results.

Last year the General Assembly adopted the first annual programme budget since the 1970s, implementing General Assembly resolution 72/266. The United Kingdom remains a firm supporter of the Secretary-General's reform agenda. The move to an annual budget is an important element of these reforms. It brings the United Nations' plans, budgets and performance reports closer to the point of implementation and means it can be more agile and responsive to the challenges it faces. We look forward to hearing how this is helping the United Nations adapt to and better deliver mandates; address emerging challenges – like COVID19; and ensure a greater focus and accountability for actual results.

The world has changed significantly over the past six months. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on all of us, including how we operate. Whilst recognising that there remain significant unknowns about what COVID 19 means for the United Nations' work, we would welcome a latest assessment of implications for the planned work in 2021 during our consideration of the programme budget.

We share the Secretary-General's concerns about the liquidity situation the United Nations continues to face. We commend the Controller and the rest of the Organisation for prioritising how available resources are used in an effort to mitigate the impact on mandate delivery. Such a situation is far from satisfactory and not sustainable. We reiterate our call for Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full and in good time. We also encourage the Secretary-General to identify new and innovative ways to help alleviate these liquidity challenges for the regular budget, and hope that the UN – like all of us – will take lessons from the pandemic into the way we operate in future.

Mr Chair,

Finally, I would like to assure you of my delegation's commitment to work constructively with all delegations to reach a good and timely outcome on the 2021 budget.