

What You Need to Know:

Anticoagulation Clinic

Mercy Heart & Vascular Institute offers a clinic staffed by pharmacists specially trained in anticoagulation therapy to educate and monitor patients using oral anticoagulants or low-molecular weight heparin products. The clinic pharmacists, working with your doctor, monitor and adjust anticoagulation therapy to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks associated with therapy, as well as provide information on medication-related issues. Clinics of these types have been very effective at helping doctors provide the highest-quality care to their patients.

What is Anticoagulation Therapy?

People who have certain conditions (atrial fibrillation, artificial heart valves), or who are undergoing certain types of surgery are at risk for forming blood clots. Blood clots can block blood flow to an extremity, or break off and travel elsewhere in the body, causing heart attacks, strokes, or pulmonary embolisms. Anticoagulation therapy with medications such as Coumadin (generic name warfarin) is the most effective way to prevent blood clots from occurring in patients at risk. This type of therapy must be monitored closely to make sure that you are getting the best protection from blood clot formation while avoiding any possible complications.

What is the Anticoagulation Clinic?

The Anticoagulation Clinic was developed to provide doctors and patients with a specially trained team dedicated to handling all aspects of therapy.

Who makes up the Anticoagulation Clinic team?

The team is made up of the pharmacists, your primary care doctor and your cardiologist or pulmonologist.

How will I benefit from the Anticoagulation Clinic?

The Anticoagulation Clinic is made up of specially trained pharmacists who work as a team with doctors to provide education and monitoring of patients on anticoagulation therapy. The pharmacists will teach you about the various factors that can affect your therapy, and how to avoid complications. They will also make sure your blood tests are scheduled, monitor your progress, and help avoid any possible complications or interactions with your therapy. They are available seven days a week to answer any questions you may have regarding your medications, and help doctors and patients plan for any event that might disrupt therapy (dental appointments, minor surgical procedures or extended vacations). Since their primary responsibility is managing this type of therapy, they are dedicated to making sure that laboratory results are returned quickly and patients receive regular follow-up.

What other services does the clinic offer?

The pharmacists in the Anticoagulation Clinic will be happy to answer questions regarding any of your prescription or over-the-counter medications.

How does the clinic monitor my therapy?

Following an initial education visit, you will be asked to visit the office or laboratory at regular intervals to have blood drawn to monitor your therapy. A pharmacist will telephone you with the results, ask you about any possible complications and answer any questions you might have. The pharmacist will then adjust your dose of Coumadin (warfarin) if necessary, and tell you when your next laboratory test is due.

What involvement will my doctor have with the Anticoagulation Clinic?

Your doctor will refer you to the Anticoagulation Clinic. The pharmacists stay in close contact with your doctor as they manage your therapy. Your doctor receives frequent progress reports from the team members, and immediate contact if questions arise. Clinic pharmacists stay in touch with you by telephone, and reports of these contacts are placed in your medical record.

How do I get into the Anticoagulation Clinic?

You can easily be included in the program with your doctor's approval. Call 564.2880 for more information.