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## Anticoagulants (Warfarin, Heparin and Clexane) and Breastfeeding

**The information provided is taken from various reference sources. It is provided as a guideline. No responsibility can be taken by the author or the Breastfeeding Network for the way in which the information is used. Clinical decisions remain the responsibility of medical and breastfeeding practitioners. The data presented here is intended to provide some immediate information but cannot replace input from professionals and voluntary breastfeeding personnel.**

### **Anti-coagulants to Prevent and Treat Blood Clots in Mothers who are Breastfeeding**

Blood clots may develop in the calves (deep vein thrombosis/DVT) or the lungs (pulmonary embolism/PE). Risks increase in patients who smoke or who are over weight. They increase if the person is immobile for prolonged periods e.g. during travel or after surgery.

Pregnancy increases your chances of getting DVT, with approximately 1 in 1,000 pregnant women developing the condition. The risk is considerably increased if your Body Mass Index (BMI) is over 30

The symptoms of a DVT in the leg include:

- swelling,
- pain,
- warm skin,
- tenderness, and
- redness, particularly at the back of your leg, below the knee.

A DVT usually (although not always) affects one leg (NHS Choices [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk))

If you have a BMI of more than 30, have a previous history of DVT or develop symptoms of a DVT or PE you may be given daily injections of heparin or a low molecular weight heparinoid (enoxaparin, dalteparin and tinzaparin).

These drugs do not pass into breastmilk in any significant amount as the molecules are very large and the drugs have very poor oral bioavailability.

**To find your nearest Breastfeeding Supporter call the Supporterline 0300 100 0210**

*Calls to 0300 numbers cost no more than calls to UK numbers starting 01 and 02 and will be part of any inclusive minutes that apply to your provider and call package*

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**You can continue to breastfeed normally** but you will probably be advised that your baby should receive vitamin K injections at delivery. Further Vitamin K is also found in breastmilk (as well as artificial formula).

You may also receive warfarin tablets to take. Warfarin is an anticoagulant that is taken as tablets once daily. The dose of warfarin has to be precise to ensure that the blood does not clot too easily, or that it does not cause excessive bleeding. This may involve regular monitoring of your INR (a measure of your clotting levels) by blood tests.

You can continue to breastfeed normally whilst taking warfarin up to 12mg daily, as levels passing through breastmilk are too low to affect your baby's blood clotting. No adverse reactions in breastfed infants have been reported from maternal warfarin use during lactation

### **References**

- Lactmed <http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/cgi-bin/sis/htmlgen?LACT>
- Hale T Medications in Mother's Milk 2008