



SELF HELP

Anticoagulant interactions with other medication

The type of medication you can take for other conditions will depend on the type of treatment you are prescribed for Hughes/antiphospholipid syndrome.

Aspirin/clopidogrel

Both aspirin and clopidogrel are prescribed for people who have not had a major thrombotic event. Clopidogrel is often given to people who are asthmatic or have digestive problems as it is gentler on the stomach.

With both aspirin and clopidogrel, you must let the pharmacist know before you buy any over-the-counter medicines such as pain killers or cough medicine. Your GP should be aware of any drug interactions with aspirin and clopidogrel; in particular, you should not be prescribed medication which can cause gastrointestinal bleeding including non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as diclofenac, ibuprofen and naproxen.

It is safe to take paracetamol and codeine based pain relief if you are taking either aspirin or clopidogrel.

Heparin

Heparin is considered a relatively safe drug with not many contraindications but it should be used with caution if the person is known to have: an allergy to heparin; major bleeding; bacterial infection of the heart valves and lining (bacterial endocarditis); conditions with a high risk of uncontrolled bleeding such as haemophilia; an active peptic ulcer; or a reduced platelet count.

Warfarin

Many Hughes/antiphospholipid syndrome patients will be on lifelong warfarin and, unfortunately, warfarin reacts with nearly all medicines. Taking other medication as well as warfarin is not a problem, but your INR levels are likely to be affected when you either start or stop other medicines.

Paracetamol and codeine can be taken safely with warfarin for pain relief, although these can affect INR control if taken for long periods. Ibuprofen and aspirin should be avoided as they can cause bleeding, although aspirin can be prescribed by your doctor in certain circumstances.

Many medicines can interact with warfarin, most notably, antibiotics, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), anti-depressants, glucosamine, indigestion medicine such as omeprazole, lansoprazole and barbiturates. The safest way to check whether there are any drug interactions with warfarin is to ask your doctor or pharmacist, and to read the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine. In some cases, you may need to monitor your INR more closely when you start or stop other medication.