



Low Molecular Weight Heparin (LMWH)

What is Low Molecular Weight Heparin?

Low molecular weight heparin (LMWH) is a medication which thins the blood. It helps prevent blood clots from forming in the veins and treats blood clots already present in the veins by preventing the blood clot from extending or getting larger. LMWH is generally used for only a short period of time for anticoagulation (blood thinning), while Warfarin/Coumadin® (a blood thinner in pill form) is for longer term anticoagulation.

It can be given once or twice a day by a simple injection under the skin. The patient or family member can be taught to give the injection. The use of LMWH has allowed patients with blood clots to be treated at home, or with only a short hospital stay in some cases.

What are the side effects?

The major side effect associated with LMWH, as with any blood thinner, is bleeding. You must notify your physician if you have any unusual bleeding, for example, heavy nosebleeds, bleeding gums, vomiting blood, blood in bowel movements, or heavy vaginal bleeding.

LMWH can cause local irritation or inflammation (tenderness and redness) at the injection site. Call your physician if you develop any generalized rash or reaction.

What else do I need to know?

You should avoid the use of any other medications which may increase your risk of bleeding while you are on LMWH. This includes aspirin, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications (ibuprofen, naproxen, etc.), COX II Inhibitors (Celebrex[®], and Bextra[®]), as well as some herbal medications/supplements which can cause blood thinning. Always consult your physician before you begin any new medication, including any over the counter medications. Notify all of your medical providers (dentist, podiatrist, gynecologist, etc.) that you are on a blood thinning medication.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by UMHS and for which UMHS does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Patient Education by [University of Michigan Health System](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#).

Last Revised January 2018



FRANKEL
CARDIOVASCULAR CENTER
MICHIGAN MEDICINE