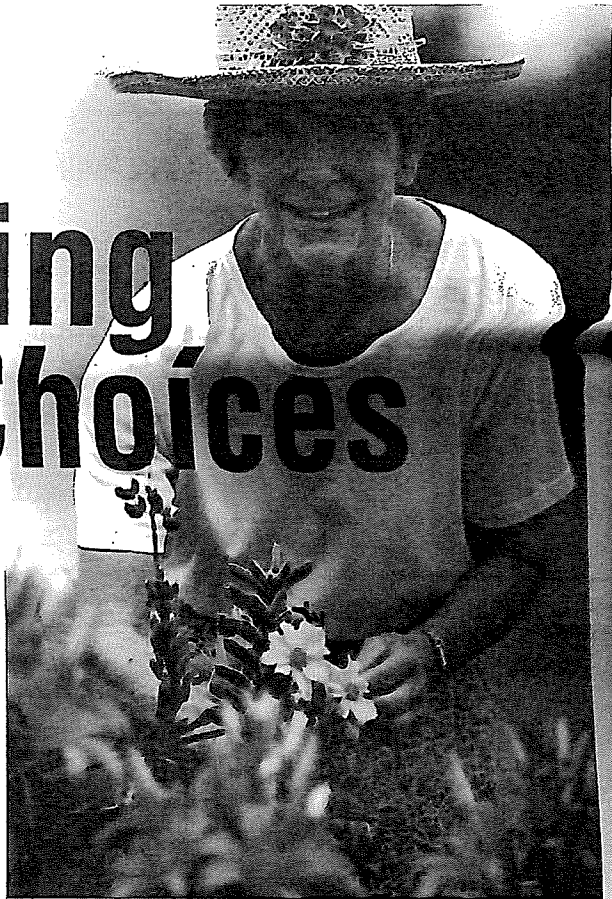


Making Choices

Treatments to
Prevent Stroke in
Patients with
Atrial Fibrillation



A Decision Aid for Patients

Group B

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Welcome



- This workbook provides some information to prepare you for a discussion with your physician about the best treatment for you to prevent stroke from atrial fibrillation.
- This workbook comes with a cassette tape.
- The tape guides you through the workbook.
- Have a pencil ready to answer questions about your opinions.

Instructions

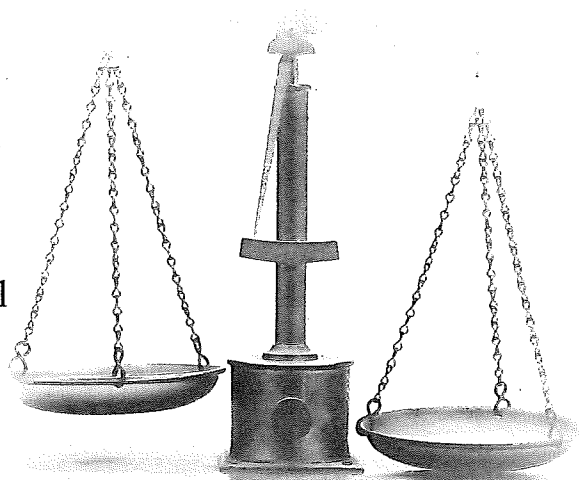
1. Set aside 50-60 minutes.
2. Place the cassette in a tape recorder.
3. Press the play button.
4. Stay on the page until you are asked to turn to the next page.

This workbook is for you if:

- you have atrial fibrillation
- you are wondering about the different treatments available to reduce your chance of having a stroke
- you are wondering which of these treatments is best for you

You will learn about:

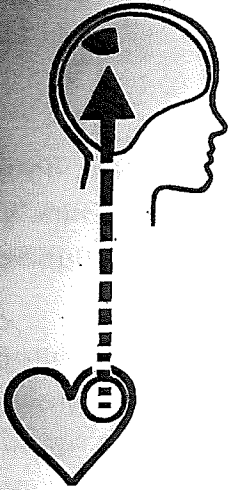
- Atrial fibrillation
- Strokes
- The benefits and risks of different treatment options to prevent stroke from atrial fibrillation
- Deciding with your doctor, which treatment option is best for you



Atrial Fibrillation

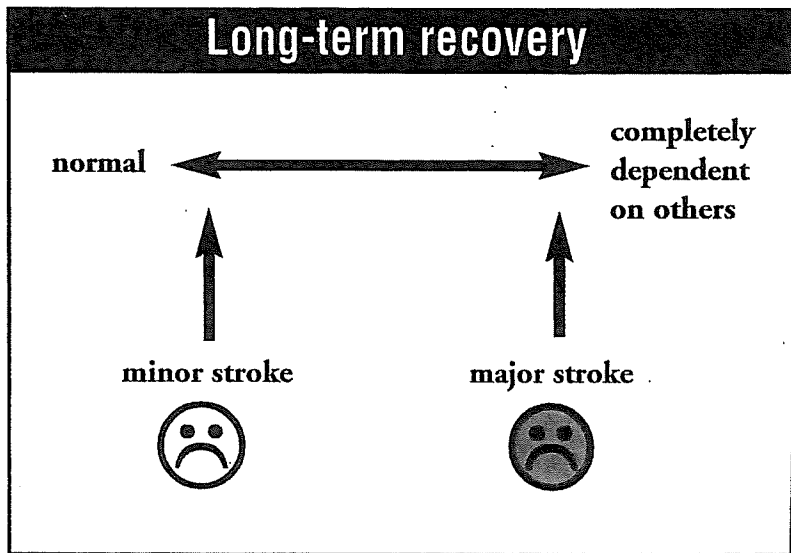
- A very common heart condition
- Disturbance of the heart rhythm
- The heart beats irregularly, and often quickly
- Many different causes
- Increases your chance of having a stroke
- Medications such as digoxin do NOT reduce your chance of stroke from atrial fibrillation
- You need to consider taking other medications

Stroke



occurs because a blood clot has formed in the heart, breaks off and travels in a blood vessel to the brain

Range of Stroke from Atrial Fibrillation:



If a person does have a stroke, there is an equal chance of the stroke being minor or major.

Minor Stroke



Initial Physical Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suddenly cannot move or feel your arm and leg on one side
Initial Mental Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mild difficulty saying what you want to say
Pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No physical pain
Initial Chance of Dying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rarely die from a minor stroke



Hospitalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admission to hospital
Long-Term Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weakness and numbness improve, slight weakness and numbness of arm and leg remains• Return of normal speech• Normal function for most everyday activities• Return home after one week
Further Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased risk of having more strokes• Risk can be decreased with medications

Major Stroke



Initial Physical Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sudden dizziness• Unable to move or feel your arm and leg on one side• Cannot swallow
Initial Mental Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speech is slurred and difficult for others to understand• Unable to say what you want to say• Unable to understand what is being said to you
Pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No physical pain
Initial Chance of Dying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approximately one of five people who have a major stroke will die within weeks of their stroke





Hospitalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admission to hospital
Long-Term Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After three months:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Require help to walk- Difficulty thinking clearly- Unable to understand others except for simple instructions- Speech remains slurred and difficult to understand- Able to dress and feed yourself- Poor bladder and bowel control• You remain this way for the rest of your life:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- May need nursing home
Further Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For the next several years, another stroke or illness (such as pneumonia) is likely to cause your death

Review

- Atrial fibrillation increases your chance of having a stroke

Long-term problems

	Minor stroke 	Major stroke 
Physical symptoms	mild weakness in an arm and leg on one side	severe weakness in an arm and leg on one side
Problems with thinking and speaking	none	difficulty understanding what others are saying
Everyday activities	independent	dependent on others

Treatment Options

There are 3 options available to you:

Option #1

Take no medications to prevent stroke

Option #2

Take coated aspirin on a long-term basis

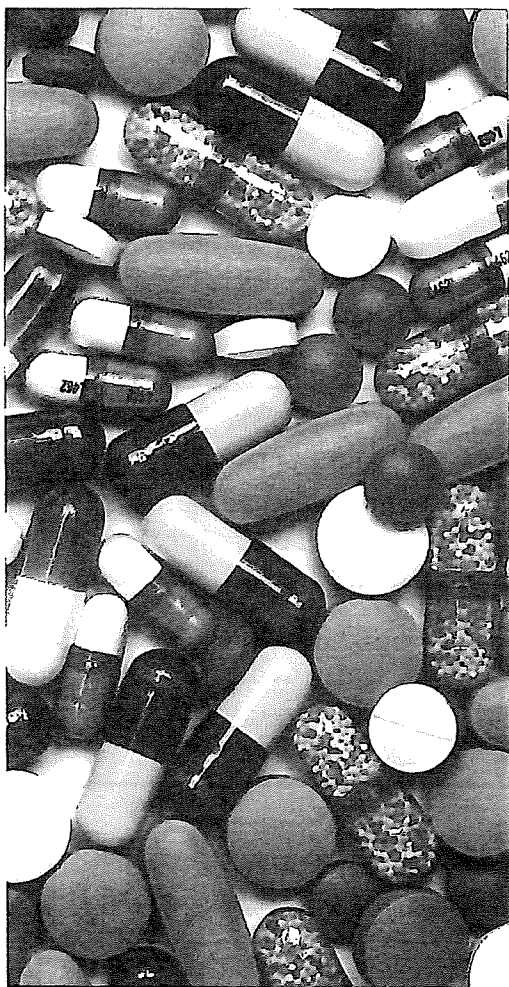
Option #3

Take warfarin on a long-term basis



Option #1

Taking no
medication to
prevent stroke



Chance of HAVING A
STROKE in next 2 years

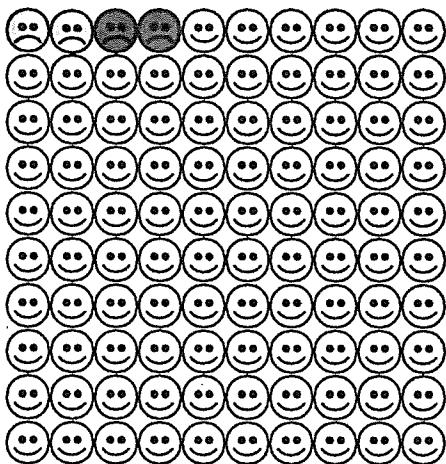


4 out of 100

Chance of NO STROKE in
next 2 years

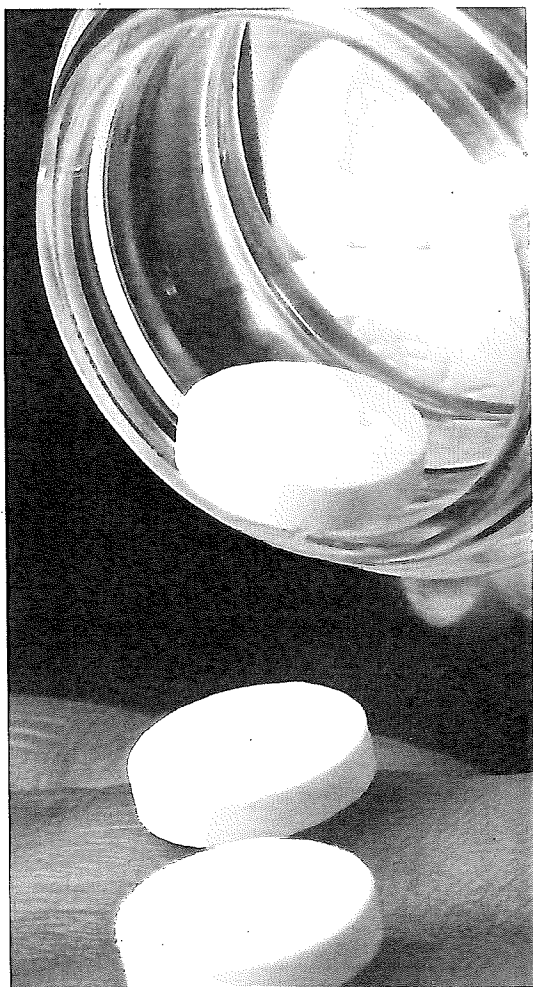


96 out of 100



Option #2

Taking
coated
aspirin
daily



Benefit: Some Stroke Prevention

Chance of HAVING A
STROKE in next 2 years

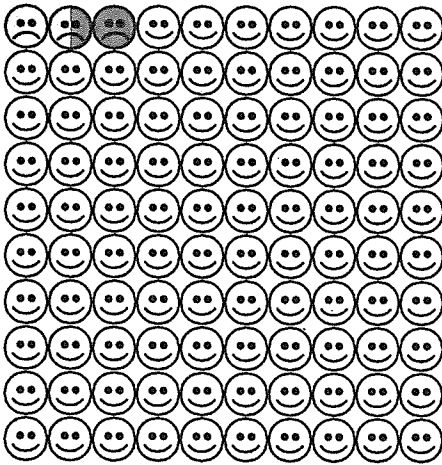


3 out of 100

Chance of NO STROKE in
next 2 years



97 out of 100



Risks and disadvantages of coated aspirin

Severe Bleeding




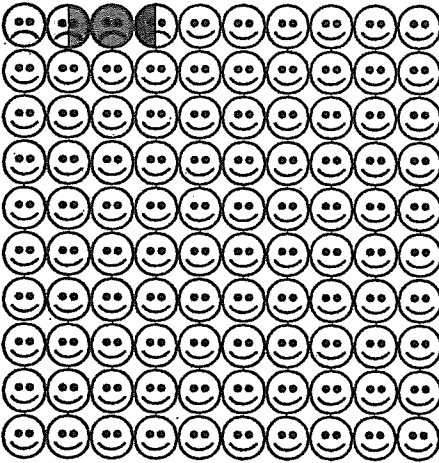
AN EXAMPLE IS A STOMACH BLEED:

PHYSICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feel unwell for two days then suddenly vomit blood
TREATMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admission to hospital• Test with a tube in throat to see where you are bleeding• Sedation to ease the discomfort of the test• No operation needed• Blood transfusions
RECOVERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hospital stay for 2 days to one week• Tired for 3 weeks but will recover• Pills taken for the next 2-6 weeks to prevent further bleeding• You will need to discuss with your doctor the need for a change in medication• After that you are back to normal

Risk:

Chance of SEVERE
BLEEDING in next 2 years

 0.5 out of 100



Disadvantages of coated aspirin:

1. Side effects

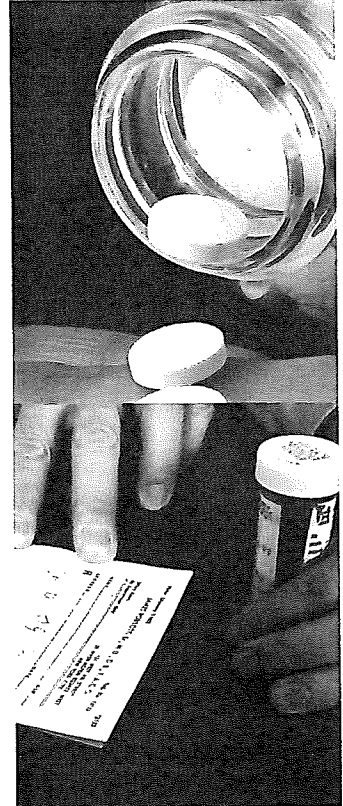
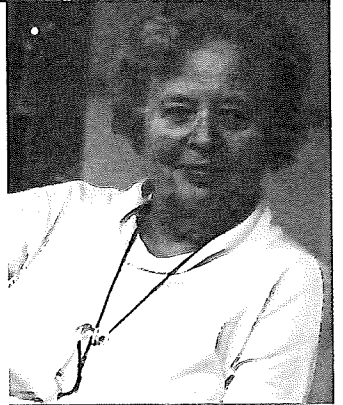
- stomach pain or heartburn

2. Inconveniences

- taking coated aspirin on a daily basis

3. Costs

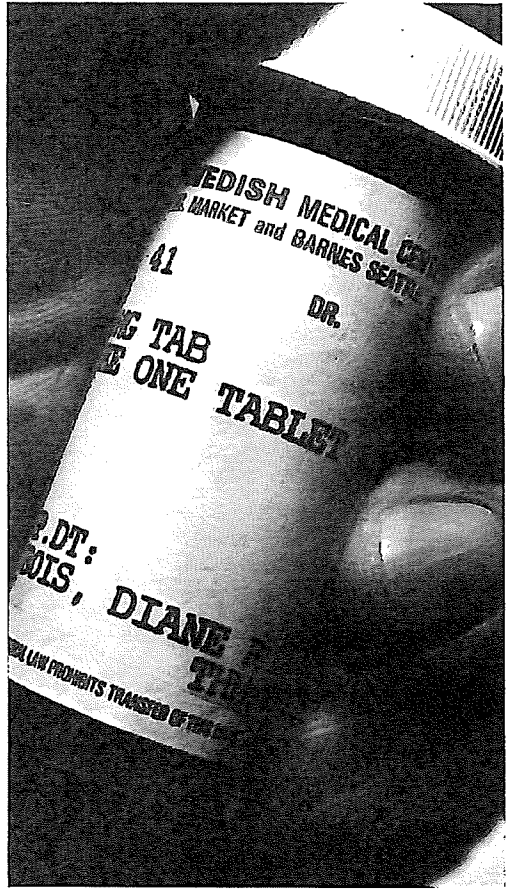
- the cost of coated aspirin



Turn to next page for
Option #3

Option #3

Taking
warfarin daily



Benefit: Greater Stroke Prevention

Chance of HAVING A
STROKE in next 2 years

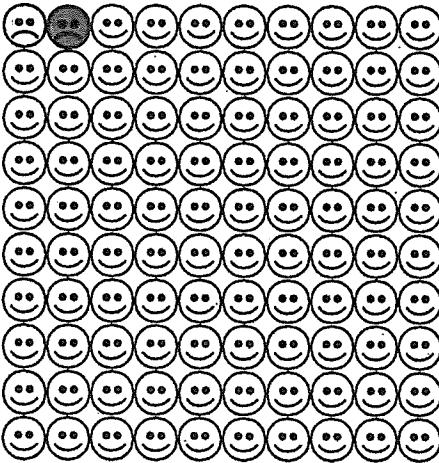


2 out of 100

Chance of NO STROKE in
next 2 years



98 out of 100



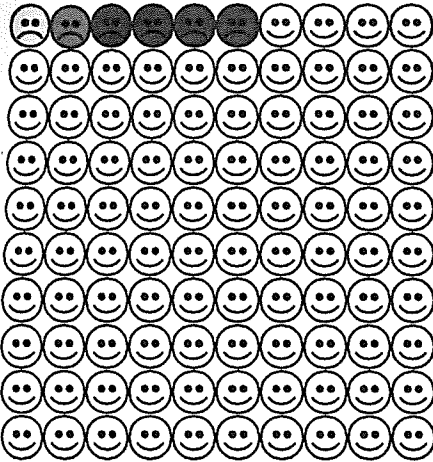
Risk and disadvantages of warfarin

Risk:

Chance of SEVERE
BLEEDING in next 2 years



4 out of 100



Disadvantages of warfarin:

1. Other side effects

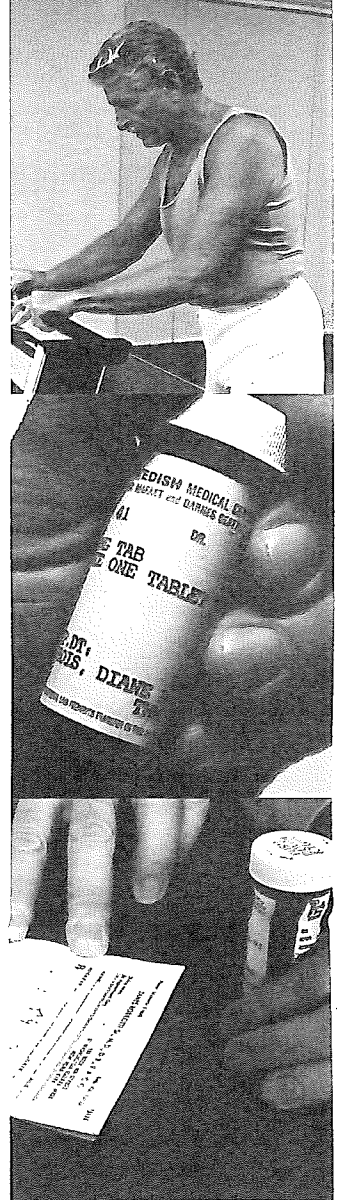
- easy bruising

2. Inconveniences

- taking warfarin on a daily basis
- regular appointments to have your blood checked
- restrict alcohol consumption
- avoidance of activities that increase your chance of bleeding

3. Cost

- the cost of warfarin (\$20/month)
- cost of parking

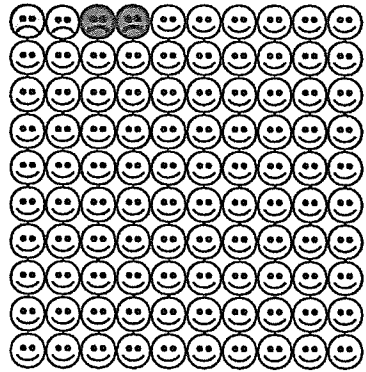


Summary

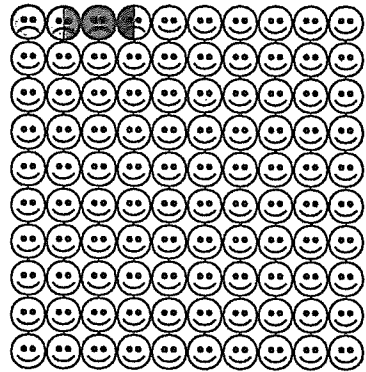
Choices

No medication to prevent stroke

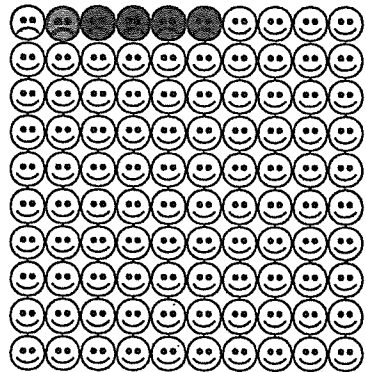
Stroke and Bleeding Risk



Coated aspirin to prevent stroke



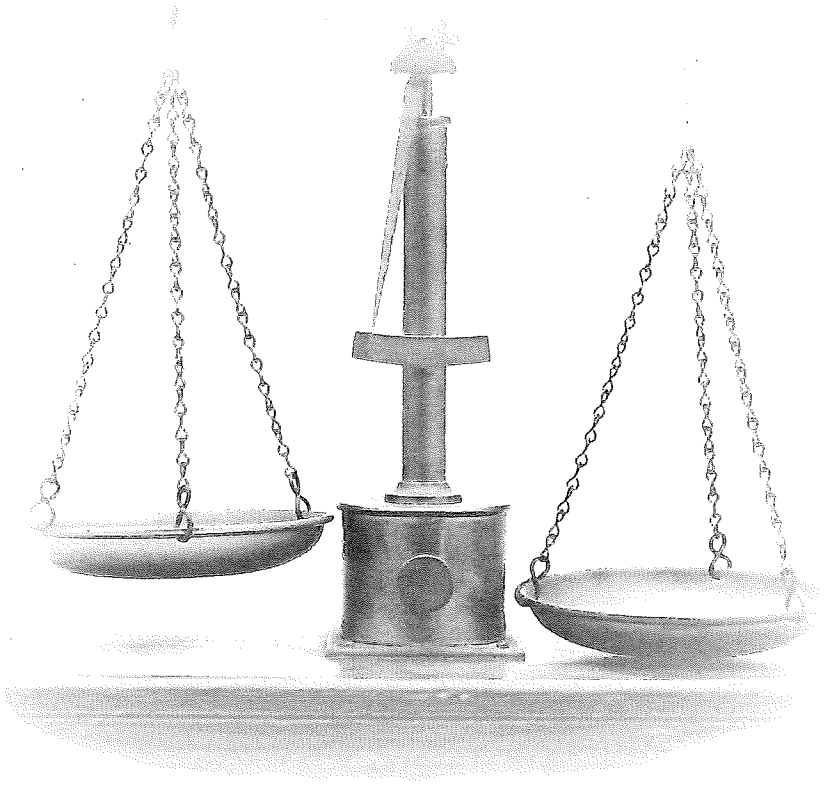
Warfarin to prevent stroke



Points to Consider

- 4 out of 100 chance of stroke
 - no side effects from medication
 - no medication to take
-
- reduces chance of stroke to 3 out of 100
 - chance of severe bleeding is 0.5 out of 100
 - could suffer stomach pain or heartburn
 - need to take medication daily
 - small cost
-
- reduces chance of stroke to 2 out of 100
 - chance of severe bleeding is 4 out of 100
 - need to have regular blood testing
 - should restrict alcohol intake
 - avoid activities that increase the chance of injury
 - need to take medication daily
 - costs approximately \$20 per month

5 Steps to Weighing My Benefits and Risk



1. Does my **Medical Situation** suggest I may have problems with side-effects from medication?
2. What are **My Opinions in Weighing the Pros and Cons** of therapy?

PROS: **Reducing my chance of stroke.**
How much do I want to reduce my chance of stroke?

CONS: **Side-effects and inconvenience.**
Which of the **CONS** concern me enough to affect my decision about therapy?

3. What **Questions** need answering before deciding?
4. **Who should decide** about therapy?
5. What is **My Overall Leaning** about taking therapy?

Lillian's Situation

1. My Medical Situation

no problems

2. My Opinions in Weighing the Pros and Cons of Therapy

PROS

CONS

Reducing My Chances of Stroke	Side-effects and Inconvenience
<p>How much do I want to reduce my chance of stroke...</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> as much as possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as much as I can manage in my situation 	<p>Which CONS concern me enough to affect my decision about therapy...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • risk of severe bleeding • need for regular blood testing • limiting alcohol to 1-2 drinks per day • limiting contact activities • cost of medications • other costs • possible stomach pain/heartburn • taking medication daily • other, please specify _____

3. My Questions and Comments

If I were to take warfarin, what are the warning signs that I may be about to bleed?

4. Who Should Decide?

My doctor and I together

5. My Overall Leaning

Warfarin

▲
Warfarin

▲
Coated
Aspirin

▲
No treatment
to prevent stroke

Unsure

John's Situation

1. My Medical Situation

- usual activities make me prone to injury*
specify: farmer working with large animals

2. My Opinions in Weighing the Pros and Cons of Therapy

PROS

CONS

Reducing My Chances of Stroke	Side-effects and Inconvenience
<p>How much do I want to reduce my chance of stroke...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as much as possible <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> as much as I can manage in my situation 	<p>Which CONS concern me enough to affect my decision about therapy..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> risk of severe bleeding <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> need for regular blood testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limiting alcohol to 1-2 drinks per day <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> limiting contact activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cost of medications • other costs • possible stomach pain/heartburn • taking medication daily • other, please specify _____

3. My Questions and Comments

Right now I think warfarin is too dangerous for me. Can I reconsider after I retire from farming?

4. Who Should Decide?

I should after considering my doctor's opinion

5. My Overall Leaning

Aspirin

▲
Warfarin

▲
Coated
Aspirin

▲
No treatment
to prevent stroke

Unsure

Alice's Situation

1. My Medical Situation

- previous stomach bleed
- previous falls

2. My Opinions in Weighing the Pros and Cons of Therapy

PROS

CONS

Reducing My Chances of Stroke	Side-effects and Inconvenience
<p>How much do I want to reduce my chance of stroke...</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> as much as possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as much as I can manage in my situation 	<p>Which CONS concern me enough to affect my decision about therapy...</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> risk of severe bleeding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need for regular blood testing • limiting alcohol to 1-2 drinks per day • limiting contact activities • cost of medications • other costs • possible stomach pain/heartburn • taking medication daily • other, please specify _____

3. My Questions and Comments

This is a hard decision. What do you think doctor?

4. Who Should Decide?

My doctor

5. My Overall Leaning

Unsure



▲
Warfarin

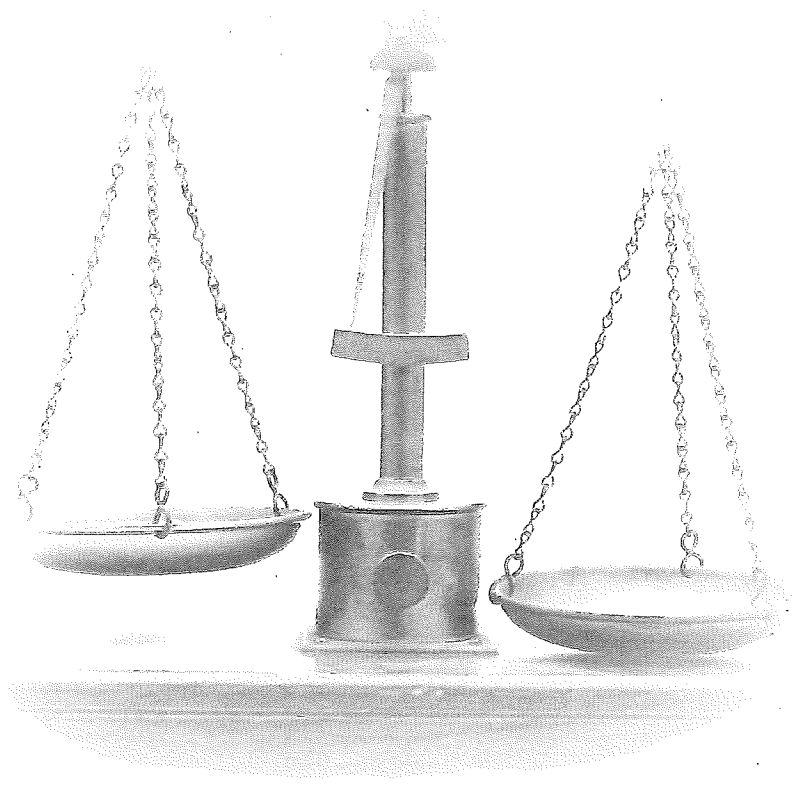
▲
Coated
Aspirin

▲
No treatment
to prevent stroke

Unsure

**Please open the
worksheet entitled:**

“Weighing My Own Pros and Cons:”



Additional Readings

Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada.

The Canadian Family Guide to Stroke:

Prevention, Treatment, Recovery.

Toronto, Random House of Canada Limited, 1996

The American Heart Association.

Family Guide to Stroke Treatment,

Recovery and Prevention.

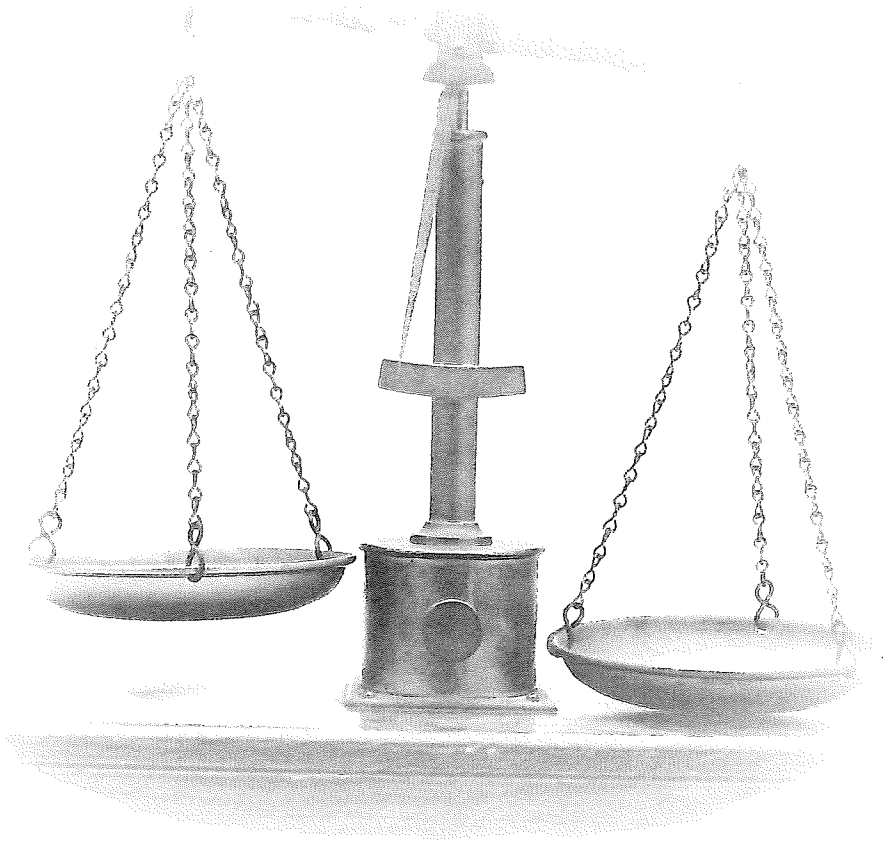
NY, Time Books, 1994

Desmond Julian and Claire Marley.

Coronary Heart Disease: The Facts.

NY, Oxford University Press, 1991

Weighing My Own Pros and Cons



A Personal Assessment Worksheet

Step 1 My Medical Situation

Do I have these factors...

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Previous stomach ulcer or bleeding | <input type="checkbox"/> Take medications for arthritis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stomach pain or heartburn on aspirin | <input type="checkbox"/> Previous falls |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allergy to aspirin | <input type="checkbox"/> Usual activities make me prone to injury |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take more than 1-2 drinks of alcohol per day | Specify: |
| | |

Step 2 My Opinions in Weighing the Pros and Cons of Therapy

PROS

CONS

Reducing My Chances of Stroke	Side-effects and Inconvenience
<p>How much do I want to reduce my chance of stroke...</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> as much as possible</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> as much as I can manage in my situation</p>	<p>Which CONS concern me enough to affect my decision about therapy...</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> risk of severe bleeding</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> need for regular blood testing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> limiting alcohol to 1-2 drinks per day</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> limiting contact activities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> cost of medications</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> other costs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> possible stomach pain/heartburn</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> taking medication daily</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> other, please specify _____</p>

Step 3 My Questions and Comments

Step 4 Who Should Decide?

- I should, after considering the opinions of my doctor, family, or others
- My doctor and I together
- My doctor
- Unsure

Step 5 My Overall Leaning

▲
Warfarin

▲
Coated
Aspirin

▲
No treatment
to prevent stroke

Unsure

**Please mail this to the Study
Coordinator when completed**

Study Number: ____ - _____

Initials: _____



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