What is anticoagulation therapy?

Anticoagulation therapy is the use of medication to help prevent the formation of blood clots. Anticoagulant medications, such as warfarin (Coumadin®), are often referred to as "blood thinners."

Taking too little or too much blood thinner can be dangerous and can result in serious blood clots or bleeding. Because genetics, diet and other medications you take can affect how blood thinners work in your body, close monitoring is important to assure safe and effective treatment.

Patients on blood thinners require regular testing of their International Normalized Ratio (INR) level. This blood test tells your health care provider how long it takes for your blood to clot.
What is the Anticoagulation Clinic (ACC)?
The Anticoagulation Clinic at Glencoe Regional Health Services (GRHS) is a service designed to help patients safely manage their anticoagulation medications on an outpatient basis. Our goal is to help you receive the greatest benefit from your anticoagulation medication while reducing the potential risks associated with it.

What are the benefits of the ACC?
The ACC reduces the amount of time you spend waiting for medication instructions. It also provides support through face-to-face education. Studies have shown that patients who are managed by anticoagulation clinics have fewer incidences of bleeding and clotting complications, resulting in fewer hospital visits.

How does the ACC work?
Your health care provider will refer you to the Anticoagulation Clinic if you have been prescribed an anticoagulant. At GRHS, the ACC is staffed by nurses and pharmacists who are licensed and specially trained in anticoagulation therapy. Each appointment at the ACC will include:
- A review of your medical history, current medications and health changes
- A quick and accurate finger stick blood test to check your INR level. Your results will be available within 15-30 seconds
- A review of your test results and medication dosage adjustments, if needed
- Patient education
- Scheduling your next appointment

You will not see your primary provider during your ACC appointment, but your test results will be shared with him or her. The ACC staff will also consult your health care provider as needed and information obtained at the visit will always be readily available to your provider.

Do I need an appointment?
Yes. Visits are scheduled through the ACC registered nurse. To schedule, call 320-864-7980 or toll free 1-888-526-4242, ext. 7980. For your convenience, appointments are available at our main campus in Glencoe, as well as at our clinics in Lester Prairie and Stewart.

What should I bring to my appointment?
Please bring a complete medication list with you to every appointment, including all prescriptions, supplements and over-the-counter and herbal medications. You should also bring your insurance card and photo identification.

How often will I need to be seen?
The frequency with which you will be seen depends on your INR results. Patients who are new to anticoagulation therapy will need to be seen more often (usually weekly) before increasing the time between tests. Once your INR level has become stable, you usually only need to be tested once a month. However, because diet, illness and other medications you take can affect your body's response to anticoagulants, there may be times when you need to be retested more frequently until your INR level stabilizes again.

Will my insurance cover this service?
The GRHS Anticoagulation Clinic is classified as an outpatient hospital service. Medicare, Medicaid and private health insurance plans usually provide coverage for these services. Keep in mind that the terms of your policy will apply, including any deductible or coinsurance requirements. Please check with your health insurance plan to review your benefits for outpatient hospital services.