

## Different Types of Blood Thinners



*Dr. Ryan is board certified in Internal Medicine and is a clinical densitometrist. He sees patients in Geneva.*

*By Mark S. Ryan, MD*

Blood clotting is an important bodily function. It stops bleeding. But it can also cause harm. Clots can form at inappropriate times and places and interfere with blood flow, leading to respiratory failure, heart attack, stroke,

or damage to other organs. In some cases, clots can cause death.

There are several types of medications to prevent and treat inappropriate clots. These are commonly referred to as “blood thinners,” but they don’t actually change the thickness of the blood. Some have an effect on the platelets (small blood cells that accumulate at the site of a fresh clot). Some interfere with the balance of proteins in the blood that form or dissolve clots. Some are oral medications, but others can only be given by injection.

Oral “anti-platelet” medications include aspirin, Plavix (clopidogrel), Aggrenox (aspirin/dipyridamole), Pletal (cilostazol), and others. Intravenous forms, such as Integrelin and Reopro are used in the hospital or cardiac catheterization suite. Anti-platelet medications are used

most often to prevent arterial clots in the heart and brain.

Another common type of blood thinner is heparin. This rapidly-acting medication interferes with the clotting proteins in the blood.

Intravenous heparin has been used in the hospital for many years, but now there are alternative medications for outpatient subcutaneous injection, including Lovenox (low molecular weight heparin), Fragmin (dalteparin), and Arixtra (fondaparinux).

Acute heart attacks and strokes are sometimes treated urgently (within a few hours) with “thrombolytic” medications like streptokinase or TPA that speed up the processes that dissolve clots.

Coumadin (warfarin) is another very commonly used medication for the prevention of clots in the leg veins, lungs, and heart. Many people with atrial fibrillation or artificial heart valves are on long term oral warfarin. Warfarin works by blocking the formation of clotting factors in the liver that depend on vitamin K. Because of this, the amount of vitamin

K in the diet needs to be kept relatively constant. Warfarin therapy must be monitored with regular blood tests. A measurement is made of the “Prothrombin Time” (PT) and then a calculation is done of the “International Normalized Ratio” (INR). The INR is a standard that allows comparison of results from different laboratories. Finger Lakes Medical Associates Testing Center has recently started measuring the PT and INR using a finger-stick method that allows rapid accurate results. We also provide information about warfarin and inquire about any changes in your diet, medications, or health since the last test. Many medications will interact with warfarin, so we ask you to let us know if your medications have changed.

All types of blood thinners have potentially life saving benefits, but also can have serious side effects. If you are on one of these medications and you need more information, check with your health care provider. ☉

## FLMA News Briefs

• **It's sad to say good-bye** but we are happy to wish our retiring staff members long, happy, and healthy retirements. **Mona Fox** worked for seven years as a receptionist in our Pediatric Department. **Velma Lauwaert** spent ten years processing payroll for us. **Sharon Hoster, RN**, was our Internal Medicine phone triage nurse for eleven years. **Yvonne Parrott, RN**, worked in our Pediatrics Department as a floor nurse and a triage nurse starting in 1979. Enjoy your retirement, ladies!

• FLMA staff members, **Melissa Sharp, LPN**, and **Emily McLaughlin, LPN**, graduated from Marian S. Whelan School of Nursing and successfully completed their LPN certification exams. Emily works in our Internal Medicine Department, and Melissa works as a “float” nurse filling in wherever we have a need. Congratulations on your achievement, Melissa and Emily.



• One of our pediatricians, **Jane C. McCaffrey, MD**, was recently honored with Catholic Charities’ **Sharing the Light** award. The award is given to individuals who “have demonstrated a level of dedication, passion, and commitment to the community..., and their

*Dr. McCaffrey is board certified in Pediatrics and Developmental/Behavioral Pediatrics, a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and founder of our Pediatrics Department. She sees patients in Geneva and Penn Yan.*

efforts have left an indelible mark on the lives of many.” Honored along with Dr. McCaffrey at the June 8th festivities were Bunny Bell, Mary Herlihy-Gearan, John Nicandri, and the Sessler Family. Congratulations to all the honorees! ☉

## Why do I need a urologist?

Urology is the branch of medicine that focuses on the urinary tract in both men and women and the reproductive system of males. Urologists are trained to diagnose, treat, and manage patients with urological disorders. The organs covered by urology include the kidneys, ureters, urinary bladder, urethra, and male genitalia. A few of the conditions that prompt patients to consult a urologist are: urinary incontinence, erectile dysfunction, vasectomy consult, kidney stones, overactive bladder, infertility, blood in the urine, bedwetting, low testosterone, male genital warts, and interstitial cystitis.

Richard Kasulke, MD, is a urologist with a wealth of experience. Prior to moving to Geneva and joining FLMA in 2003, he was a partner with Adirondack Surgical Group.

Some procedures that Dr. Kasulke performs in the office include: ultrasound (kidneys, ureters, bladder, testicles), uroflow testing, cystoscopy (viewing the interior lining of the bladder and ureters), prostate and bladder cancer treatment, vasectomy, urethral dilation, urodynamic testing, cauterization of bladder tumors and genital warts. Depending on the patient's need, Dr. Kasulke also performs surgery in the



Richard Kasulke, MD

Ambulatory Surgery Center on Pre-Emption Road and at Geneva General Hospital. Extracorporeal shockwave lithotripsy which uses sound waves to break up stones in the kidney or upper urinary tract is done at Clifton Springs Hospital.

Dr. Kasulke is accepting new patients and accepts all insurances. Call our Urology Department at 315-787-5155 to schedule an appointment. ☉

## FLMA opens anti-coagulation clinic

We are offering a new service for our patients on anticoagulation therapy. Currently most patients taking the anticoagulant Coumadin (warfarin) have their blood drawn and tested at a lab. They then wait several hours to have results completed and evaluated and dosing changes made, if needed. With FLMA's implementation of the CoaguChek system, the patient is able to give a very small sample of blood obtained from a finger prick. The blood sample is tested, and the result is displayed within minutes. Dosing can be adjusted immediately, if necessary, based on protocols from the patient's physician. The clinic is staffed by Registered Nurses with special knowledge and training in the care of patients that are taking Coumadin.

Finger Lakes Medical Associates' Anticoagulation Clinic is located in FLMA's Testing Center at 821 Pre-Emption Road in Geneva. For information on the clinic, call the Testing Center at 315-781-2061 or ask your FLMA physician. ☉

## What is the Rochester RHIO?

The Rochester Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO) is a secure online resource that gives authorized medical professionals a faster way to get the accurate, up-to-date information they need to provide the best care for patients. It does not create a centralized database of patient information, just a secure way to exchange information electronically between health care providers.

Some advantages of participation in the RHIO are:

- Fewer unnecessary tests because physicians can access results of tests performed at other locations.
- Fewer drug interactions because the system automatically warns of incorrect dosing or potential problems.
- Convenience and cost savings as records don't have to be copied and carried from one office to another.

- Fewer errors that previously resulted from poor handwriting and hard-to-read copies and faxes. FLMA is a member of the Rochester RHIO. Your participation is voluntary. For more information about the Greater Rochester RHIO, go to [www.GRRHIO.org](http://www.GRRHIO.org) or call 585-410-6800 or 877-865-7446 (toll-free). RHIO consent forms can be obtained at our offices. ☉

## Who is FLMA?

Finger Lakes Medical Associates (FLMA) is a private, physician-owned, group medical practice. The physician partners of FLMA are the owners of the organization. They are: Doctors Steve Achilles, Kathrin Berg, Danielle Clair, Mike Collins, Bev Ellington, Art Equinozzi,

Jim Hight, Rich Kasulke, Jane McCaffrey, Ned Nicolai, Bill Platzer, Jim Robbins, Mark Ryan, Marc Sadovnic, Lisa Walk-Reinard, and Bob Weinberg. FLMA has a staff of over 115 with offices in Geneva and Penn Yan. Patients are seen in the following specialties: cardiology, family practice, internal medicine, nephrology, ob/gyn, pediatrics, and urology. Finger Lakes Medical Associates is a respected corporate citizen and a major contributor to the health of the community.

## To reach FLMA

### Geneva Office

200 North Street, Suite 101  
Geneva, NY 14456

- Cardiology (315) 787-5222
- Internal Medicine (315) 787-5155
- Nephrology (315) 787-5155
- Ob/Gyn (315) 787-5111
- Pediatrics (315) 787-5200
- Urology (315) 787-5155
- Business Office (315) 787-5100

### Web Site

[www.fingerlakesmed.com](http://www.fingerlakesmed.com)

### Testing Center

821 Pre-Emption Road  
Suite 202  
Geneva, NY 14456  
(315) 781-2061

### Penn Yan Office

207½ Lake Street  
Penn Yan, NY 14527  
(315) 536-3362

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