

## Preventing errors relating to commonly used anticoagulants.

December 23, 2016

Preventing errors relating to commonly used anticoagulants. Sentinel Event Alert. 2008;41(41):1-4.

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/preventing-errors-relating-commonly-used-anticoagulants>

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Anticoagulant therapies such as heparin and warfarin are considered [high-alert medications](#), due to the high potential for patient harm if used improperly. They have been associated with adverse events in a variety of settings, including in [hospitalized patients](#) and [outpatients](#), and ensuring the safety of patients receiving anticoagulants is a [National Patient Safety Goal](#) for 2008. This [sentinel event alert](#) issued by the Joint Commission discusses the root causes of anticoagulant-associated patient harm and recommends strategies for reducing errors, including implementation of a pharmacist-led [anticoagulation service](#). Sentinel event alerts are intended to promote rapid implementation of patient safety strategies, and adherence to these recommendations is assessed on site visits by the Joint Commission. Note: This alert has been retired effective October 2019. Please see Sentinel event alert 61: [Managing the risks of direct oral anticoagulants](#).