



# New test helps pinpoint dosage for blood thinner

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By LORI MATSUKAWA / KING 5 News

SEATTLE - This spring, Steve Krafchick of Seattle discovered he has deep vein thrombosis, which puts him at risk of developing blood clots.

His doctor recommended a blood thinner called Coumadin. But it took six weeks to figure out the right dosage. He says the first days were frightening.

“They told me my dose level was 10, the target level is between 2 and 3, 10 is dangerous,” he said.

Enter a new genetic test developed by Genelex of Seattle. Genelex's CEO says half of how a person reacts to Coumadin is determined by genetics.

So their test takes the trial and error out of the dosing decision.

“Their dosing gets over steered first it's too much so they're at risk of a bleeding event,” said Genelex CEO Howard Coleman. “Then it's too little and they're at risk of getting a clot, a life-threatening clot so this gets them sooner to that stable dose.”

While too late for him, Krafchick says the test will spare the estimated 300,000 people in the U.S. who begin taking Coumadin every year from weeks of uncertainty.

“They could have gotten me on that dose within seven to 10 days at the outside, whereas it took me six weeks, eight weeks, with a lot of up and down,” Krafchick said.

The test costs \$550, but Coleman says it's worth getting a proper dosage determined quickly, before uncontrollable bleeding occurs.

It also means fewer trips to the lab for blood testing.

On Monday, the FDA will announce changes on the labels of blood thinners, indicating a genetic test may be necessary to get the dosage right.

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