



**North Bristol**  
NHS Trust

Service:  
Pharmacy

# New oral anticoagulant medications

Important information for patients taking Apixaban, Dabigatran, Edoxaban or Rivaroxaban



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This information leaflet has been given to you because you are starting or already taking a medicine known as an anticoagulant.

This leaflet contains information relating to the following new oral anticoagulants:

- Apixaban.
- Dabigatran.
- Edoxaban.
- Rivaroxaban.

## Oral anticoagulants

An anticoagulant medicine prevents blood clots from forming in your blood vessels by making your blood take longer to clot.

Warfarin was the most commonly used anticoagulant.

However for most common conditions the new anticoagulants are being increasingly used. Dabigatran, apixaban, edoxaban and rivaroxaban have a number of advantages over warfarin, although they still have similar side-effects.

The new oral anticoagulants can be used for treatment if you already have a blood clot, for example a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE). They can also be used if you are at risk of having a blood clot (prevention) for example Atrial Fibrillation (AF) or following surgery to replace a hip or knee.

This booklet provides you with important information on how to take these medicines safely. You will also be provided with an '**Anticoagulant Alert card**', which you should carry with

you at all times whilst you are taking one of these medicines. This identifies that you take an anticoagulant medication, which may be important in an emergency, and should be shown to healthcare professionals (e.g. dentist, pharmacist, doctor, nurse) before you receive treatment.

Please note that these medicines may be used to treat different patients for different reasons. Always take your medication as prescribed and check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure about your dose.

## **Monitoring you while you are taking an anticoagulant**

You will not require regular blood tests while taking one of the new oral anticoagulant medications. However you will be asked to attend for blood tests at least once a year to check your kidneys, liver and blood count.

## **Repeat prescriptions**

Make sure you do not run out of tablets or capsules and always have at least a week's supply.

## **Length of treatment**

This depends on what you are taking an anticoagulant for. Sometimes you only need to take it for a few weeks (after surgery) or months (DVT or PE). Some people may need to take an anticoagulant for the rest of their life (for example people with AF or people who are at risk of having a further DVT or PE if treatment was stopped).

**It is very important that you continue to take your anticoagulant as prescribed. Do not stop taking your anticoagulant unless you have been advised to do so by a healthcare professional. Not adhering to your anticoagulant treatment may put you at a significant risk of blood clot, mini-stroke or stroke which could be fatal.**

If you are unsure always check with your doctor or pharmacist.

### **Interactions with other medicines**

Many medicines can interact with anticoagulants. Always remind the prescriber that you are taking an anticoagulant when any changes are made to your medication. Always check with your pharmacist before buying any over-the-counter medicines (including online purchases), alternative medicines, herbal medicines or supplements.

Do not take any aspirin or anti-inflammatory pain killers e.g. ibuprofen, unless prescribed by your doctor.

## Side-effects

The most serious side-effect of anticoagulants is bleeding. If you experience any of the following, seek medical attention:

- Prolonged nosebleeds (more than 10 minutes).
- Blood in vomit.
- Blood in sputum.
- Passing blood in your urine or stools.
- Passing black stools.
- Severe or spontaneous bruising.
- Unusual headaches.
- For women, heavy or increased bleeding during your period or any other vaginal bleeding.
- Tiredness, dizziness, paleness or weakness.
- Unexplained swelling.

If you cut yourself, apply firm pressure to the site for at least five minutes using a clean, dry dressing. You will also be at an increased risk of bruising.

### **Seek immediate medical attention if you:**

- Are involved in major trauma (accident).
- Suffer a significant blow to the head.
- Are unable to stop bleeding.
- You take too much of your anticoagulant medication.

For further information on other side-effects with these medicines, please refer to the product's patient information leaflet which will be provided with your medicine.

## **Going to the dentist or contact with other healthcare professionals.**

If you are having an operation or invasive procedure (including dental procedures), ensure your doctor or dentist is aware you are taking an anticoagulant. You will need to be advised on whether the anticoagulant needs to be stopped temporarily.

## **Alcohol**

It is recommended that you do not exceed the national guidelines. These are up to two units a day for men and women. One pint of beer is two units; one pub measure of a spirit (25ml) is one unit; and one pub measure of wine (125ml) is one unit.

**It is dangerous to ‘binge drink’ while taking anticoagulants.**

## **Injury**

Where possible avoid risks from falls and injury. Do not take part in contact sports and minimise the risk of manual work injury.

## **Pregnancy**

It is not recommended to take the new oral anticoagulants during pregnancy as their effects on the unborn child are unknown. Women who are on oral anticoagulants should use reliable contraceptives and discuss plans for future pregnancy with their doctor before trying to conceive. Women who think they have become pregnant while taking an anticoagulant should seek a pregnancy test as soon as possible and, if this is positive, an urgent appointment with a doctor.

## **Breastfeeding**

Breastfeeding is not recommended whilst taking any of the new oral anticoagulants.

## **Periods**

Women may experience heavier periods while they are taking oral anticoagulants and may wish to discuss this with their GP.

# Information about the specific medicines

## Apixaban (Also known as Eliquis®)

### How should Apixaban be taken?

Apixaban tablets should be swallowed with water, with or without food. . They should be taken at roughly the same time each day. If you are unable to swallow the tablets the tablet may be crushed and mixed with water, apple juice or apple puree immediately prior to taking.

### What should I do if I miss a dose of Apixaban?

You should take the dose as soon as you remember. On the following day, you should carry on taking your usual dose.

## Rivaroxaban (also known as Xarelto®)

### How should Rivaroxaban be taken?

Rivaroxaban tablets should be taken with water and be taken with food at roughly the same time each day. If you are unable to swallow the tablets whole, the tablet may be crushed and mixed with water, apple juice or apple puree immediately prior to taking.

### What should I do if I miss a dose of Rivaroxaban?

If you are taking Rivaroxaban, **one 15mg tablet twice a day**, you should take the dose as soon as you remember or you can take two 15mg tablets at once. Do not take more than two tablets in a single day. On the following day, you should carry on taking your usual dose.

If you are taking Rivaroxaban **once a day**, you should take a tablet as soon as you remember. On the following day, you should carry on taking your usual dose. Do not take more than one tablet in a single day to make up for the missed dose.

## Dabigatran (also known as Pradaxa®)

### How should Dabigatran be taken?

The capsule should be left in the original container until ready to be taken. It should not be kept in a dosette/pill box and the capsules must not be opened.

The capsules should be taken out of the blister card by peeling off the backing foil and not be pushed through the blister foil. Dabigatran capsules should be swallowed whole with water. They can be taken with or without food but should be taken at roughly the same time each day.

### What should I do if I miss a dose of Dabigatran?

If you are taking Dabigatran **once a day**, continue with the regular dose the next day. Do not take a double dose to make up for the missed dose.

If you are taking Dabigatran **twice a day**: if it is less than six hours until the next dose is due then omit the dose and continue with your next dose as scheduled. If it is more than six hours until the next dose then take the missed dose. Do not take a double dose to make up for missed doses.

## Edoxaban (also known as Lixiana®)

### How should Edoxaban be taken?

Edoxaban tablets should be swallowed whole with water. They can be taken with or without food but should be taken at roughly the same time each day.

### What should I do if I miss a dose of Edoxaban?

You should take the dose as soon as you remember. Do not take more than one tablet in a single day to make up for the missed dose. On the following day, you should carry on taking your usual dose.

## References

eMC SPC Eliquis: [www.medicines.org.uk](http://www.medicines.org.uk)

eMC SPC Pradaxa: [www.medicines.org.uk](http://www.medicines.org.uk)

eMC SPC Xarelto: [www.medicines.org.uk](http://www.medicines.org.uk)

eMC SPC Lixiana: [www.medicines.org.uk](http://www.medicines.org.uk)

The National Patient Safety Agency 2008. Oral Anticoagulant Therapy – important information for patients:

[www.npsa.nhs.uk](http://www.npsa.nhs.uk)

## Further information

Thrombosis UK

Tel: 0300 772 9603

**[www.thrombosisuk.org](http://www.thrombosisuk.org)**

AF Association

Tel: 01789 867 502

**[www.afa.org.uk](http://www.afa.org.uk)**

Anticoagulation UK

[info@anticoagulationuk.org](mailto:info@anticoagulationuk.org)

**[www.anticoagulationuk.org](http://www.anticoagulationuk.org)**

British Heart Foundation (BHF)

Tel: 0300 330 3311

**[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)**

The Stroke Association

Tel: 0303 3033 100

**[www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)**

NHS choices

**[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)**

NICE guidance for the public

**[www.nice.org.uk/patientsandpublic/index.jsp](http://www.nice.org.uk/patientsandpublic/index.jsp)**

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**How to contact us:**



**Pharmacy patient helpline**

**0117 414 2284**



**[www.nbt.nhs.uk](http://www.nbt.nhs.uk)**

If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

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