

Patient information on the use of Direct Acting Oral AntiCoagulants (DOACs)

Aintree University Hospital **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

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This leaflet has been given to you so that you have information about your use of a Direct Acting Oral AntiCoagulant (DOAC).

I am taking:





- | | | |
|-------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Apixaban | (Eliquis) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dabigatran | (Pradaxa) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Edoxaban | (Lixiana) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rivaroxaban | (Xarelto) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

I am taking this medicine because I have:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| An irregular heart beat (known as Atrial Fibrillation or AF) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A blood clot in the leg (known as deep vein thrombosis or DVT) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A blood clot in the lungs (known as pulmonary embolism or PE) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

I am taking this medicine:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| For life/Longterm for atrial fibrillation (AF) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| For life/Longterm for blood clots (DVT or PE) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In the short term, 3-6 months, for blood clots (DVT or PE) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Apixaban	Dabigatran	Edoxaban	Rivaroxaban
			

What is a DOAC?

A DOAC is a medicine known as an anticoagulant that is used to reduce the risk of blood clots forming inside your body.

Is a DOAC a blood thinning drug?

Some people refer to DOACs and anticoagulants as 'blood thinning' however this is an older less accurate description. DOACs work by slowing down the time your blood takes to form blood clots.

How should I take my DOAC?

Sit in an up-right position. Swallow the tablet whole with a glass of water (with or without food). Rivaroxaban should be taken after food.

Do I need regular blood tests?

Unlike some other anticoagulants you will not need frequent regular blood checks. You should have blood tests once or twice a year, organised by your GP, to check your blood count, liver and kidney function.

Taking a DOAC

The dose will vary depending upon which particular drug you are taking. If you have this treatment for a blood clot then at the beginning, the treatment may be with a higher dose for a short time and/or you may also receive an anticoagulant by injection for a short time. You need to take your medicine regularly.

What are the common or problems with DOACS?

The most important unwanted effect is unexplained or prolonged bleeding.

It is very important that if you have unexplained or prolonged bleeding that you seek medical advice. **DO NOT** stop taking your DOAC without speaking to your doctor or specialist. Stopping will increase your risk of forming further clots.

If you experience any of the following you must seek urgent medical advice:

- Nose bleeds you can't stop
- Blood in your urine
- Fresh blood or black stools
- Brown coloured vomit OR fresh blood in vomit.
- Any bleeding you CANNOT stop REQUIRES medical assistance

if you knock yourself whilst taking a DOAC you might find that you bruise more easily, this is normal, however large unexplained bruising is a sign of abnormal bleeding and requires medical assistance.

If you feel you are having any any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at: www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of these medicines.

For a full list of possible side effects please see the patient information leaflet provided with your medicine.

What if I forget a dose?

If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember but if it is more than three hours after the due time then skip that dose and then continue to take doses as normal. If you have vomiting ask for advice from your nurse, doctor or NHS 111 if it affects more than a single dose.

If you take too much you are at risk of bleeding; ask for advice from your nurse, doctor or NHS 111 if this happens.

Do I need to take my DOAC every day?

Yes, DOACs are tablets that you take once or twice each day. The effect of each tablet lasts around 24 hours or 12 hours respectively.

Do I need to reduce my alcohol intake?

Excess alcohol can increase your risk of falling that can result in serious injuries (e.g. fractures and serious head injuries). Limit your daily alcohol intake to the current recommended NHS guidelines (14 units per week). For what this means see:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/alcohol/Pages/alcohol-units.aspx> or ask your nurse or doctor.

Seek advice about participating in contact or hazardous sports/activities. It may be possible to take part but your doctor or nurse may advise against the activity.

Do I have to carry a card?

Yes, you will be given an alert card that you must carry with you at all times. This explains which DOAC you are taking and has important information to be given to medical professionals in an emergency.

Do I need to inform anyone that I am taking a DOAC?

It is important to inform your GP/ Surgeon, nurse/midwives, dentist, and any other healthcare provider. If your medicine is changed or you start a new drug, you must inform your GP; this includes over the counter medicines that you buy. Anyone changing your medicines must be informed that you are taking a DOAC.

Can I get my DOAC from any pharmacy?

Yes, initially, you will be given a prescription by the hospital for you to obtain your DOAC at your local pharmacy or chemist. Thereafter your GP should be able to continue prescribing your DOAC for you directly.

How will a DOAC affect pregnancy, menstruation or breast feeding?

Women of child bearing age should avoid becoming pregnant whilst on a DOAC; contact your GP immediately if you become pregnant whilst on therapy to discuss an alternative anticoagulant.

There is a potential for heavier and longer periods whilst taking a DOAC.

Women should not breast feed whilst taking a DOAC. discuss alternative anticoagulation with your GP, midwife or health visitor.

Taking oral contraceptive pill (OCP) or hormone replacement therapy (HRT)?

The OCP and HRT can be risk factors for developing a blood clot. Discuss the risks and benefits of the OCP or HRT with your GP.

If I need surgery or an invasive procedure?

Inform your surgical team and/or GP that you are taking an anticoagulant; your DOAC will need to be stopped at least 48 hours prior to surgery and can be recommenced once your team has assessed that your risk of bleeding has passed.

Who should I contact if I need more information?

You should contact:

- Aintree Anticoagulation Clinic: Anticoagulant nurse via switchboard.
Hospital telephone number 0151 525 5980 (Routine working hours)
- Aintree Ambulatory Medical Unit (AMU) 0151-529-0297 (Routine working hours)
- NHS 24 Hour Helpline: 111

Who should I contact to get a new prescription?

You should contact your GP if you require a new prescription.

Who do I call if I have a problem at night/ weekend?

Call NHS 111 for urgent advice over the telephone

Alternatively contact your GP practice on their emergency contact telephone number

If you have any major problems, out of hours in an emergency you should go to the nearest Emergency Department (A&E).

Internet advice links and References:

NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk)

www.nhs.uk/conditions/deep-vein-thrombosis/Pages/treatment.aspx

www.nhs.uk/conditions/pulmonary-embolism/Pages/Treatment.aspx

www.thrombosis-charity.org.uk

www.anticoagulationeurope.org

www.medicines.org.uk/emc

<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg144/chapter/1-recommendations>

<http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG92>

Apixaban: <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/TA341>

Dabigatran: <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/TA327>

Rivaroxaban: <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/TA287>

Edoxaban: <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/TA354>

Rivaroxaban: <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/TA261/InformationForPublic>

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If you require a special edition of this leaflet

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