

ORAL ANTICOAGULANTS

RIVAROXABAN (XARELTO) FOR PULMONARY EMBOLISM (PE)

Information Leaflet

What Are Anticoagulants And What Do They Do?

This information leaflet has been given to you because you are starting to take a medicine known as an anticoagulant,

Anticoagulants are medicines that are prescribed specifically to prevent or treat thrombosis.

Thrombosis is a medical word for the formation of a clot inside a blood vessel.

Why Is A Clot Dangerous?

Our body naturally allows blood to clot to prevent serious blood loss, (due to an injury for example). However blood should only clot outside the blood vessels because clotting within the vessel can be dangerous.

A *Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)* is a blood clot that forms within a vein usually deep within the leg but can occur elsewhere. This blocks the normal flow of blood through the leg veins either partially or completely. If a part of the clot breaks off, it travels to the lung where it causes a *Pulmonary Embolism (PE)* which can affect your breathing and cause chest pain. The symptoms you have and how severe they are depend on how big the PE is. If the embolism is small you may not have any symptoms at all. PE usually presents with shortness of breath, rapid heartbeat, chest pain and if severe, coughing up blood or collapse.

PE is not common but can be life threatening and requires urgent medical attention. If your Dr suspects you have a PE you will receive a chest X-ray, this can sometimes show the PE straight away. A Ventilation/Perfusion (VQ) scan is another way of diagnosing PE, this involves a dye being placed in your blood, along with a drug to be inhaled whilst in the scanner. This shows the distribution of blood in your lungs and shows clearly if a PE is present.

A CT Angiogram is another test for PE. Dye is injected into a vein, which travels to the lung and a CT scanner generates images of blood in the arteries to determine if a PE is blocking the flow of blood.

How To Take Your Rivaroxaban

Rivaroxaban is taken by mouth and the usual dose for treatment of PE and prevention of DVT or PE is one 15mg tablet twice a day for the first three weeks followed by one 20mg or 15mg tablet once a day thereafter. Your doctor will tell you what dose you need to take long term. Swallow the tablet whole preferably with water together with a meal. Try to take it at the same time each day to help you remember it. Getting into a routine will help make it part of your daily life, It's a good idea to put a reminder somewhere where you will see it such as the bathroom cabinet, door of the fridge or set up a reminder on your mobile phone.

How Long Will I Have To Take This Medication?

The length of treatment with Rivaroxaban is based on an individual assessment of your risk factors and the benefits of long term preventative treatment. Your doctor will discuss this with you and together agree the most appropriate length of treatment.

If You Miss A Dose

If you are taking 15mg twice a day and have missed a dose, take it as soon as you remember that day. Do not take more than two 15mg tablets in a single day. If you forget a dose completely you can take two 15mg tablets at the same time to get a total of two tablets (30mg) in one day. On the following day you should carry on with one 15mg tablet twice a day. If you are taking a 15mg or 20mg tablet once daily and miss a dose take a tablet as soon as you remember. Take the next tablet the following day. Do not take more than one tablet in a single day to make up for a missed dose.

If You Accidentally Take An Extra Dose

If you take more tablets than you should, let your doctor know. Your doctor may wish to do a blood test to assess your risk of bleeding.

What Should I Be Aware Of?

As Rivaroxaban is an anticoagulant that is meant to alter your blood's ability to clot, a common side effect is an increased risk of bleeding either external (visible blood loss) or internal (bleeding inside the body)

Symptoms of external bleeding include

- Unusual bruising, nosebleeds, bleeding of the gums or cuts that take a long time to stop bleeding
- Menstrual flow or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
- Pink or brown urine, red or black stools

Symptoms of internal bleeding include

- Unexplained dizziness or weakness
- Swelling or discomfort
- Sudden, severe headache
- Coughing up blood, or vomiting blood or something that looks like coffee grounds

If you have any symptoms of bleeding tell your doctor, out of hours service or A&E department urgently so that you can be monitored and have your treatment re-assessed as unlike warfarin there is currently no way to reverse the effects of Rivaroxaban and so stop the bleeding.

If you cut yourself apply firm pressure to the site for at least five minutes using a clean, dry dressing.

Seek immediate medical attention if you

- Are involved in major trauma
- Suffer a significant blow to the head
- Are unable to stop bleeding

Who Should I Tell About Taking This Medicine?

Let other healthcare professionals know you are taking Rivaroxaban.

Make sure that you carry the alert card, given with the medicine, at all times. If you lose it ask your healthcare team for a replacement straightaway.

Tell your doctor

- Tell any doctor treating you that you take Rivaroxaban before receiving any treatment of other medicine.
- Let your doctor know if your lifestyle changes, for example if you change your alcohol consumption or if your weight drops below 50 kg
- If you have an operation planned, make sure your surgeon knows you are taking Rivaroxaban. You may need to stop taking Rivaroxaban temporarily to reduce your risk of bleeding during and shortly after the operation but your doctor or surgeon will advise you what to do, follow their advice carefully.

Tell your dentist

Most dentists are happy to treat patients taking anticoagulants. If your dentist knows you are taking Rivaroxaban then they will be prepared in case there is any bleeding when they are treating you. You may be advised to stop your Rivaroxaban for certain procedures but your dentist will advise you on this.

Tell your Pharmacist

Tell your Pharmacist you are taking Rivaroxaban. They will be able to advise you about which medicines can be taken with anticoagulants, this is important whether the medicines you get from them are purchased over the counter or provided on prescription.

What About Pregnancy?

Oral anticoagulants can be dangerous in pregnancy; they affect the development of the baby. If anticoagulation is needed during pregnancy alternatives to Rivaroxaban may be used.

If you are planning on becoming pregnant or suspect you have become pregnant you must tell your doctor as soon as possible so you can be given proper support and advice.

Will I Be Monitored During Treatment with Rivaroxaban

Unlike some oral anticoagulants (such as warfarin) no regular blood tests are required. The blood tests used to monitor warfarin do not help monitor Rivaroxaban. However it is important you attend regular follow up appointments with your doctor to assess and manage your condition and monitor your treatment with Rivaroxaban.

Do I Need To Avoid Any Foods When Taking Rivaroxaban

No. Rivaroxaban is not known to be affected by any foods

Can I Drink Alcohol While Taking Rivaroxaban

Rivaroxaban does not interact with alcohol. However you should always monitor your drinking and stay within the recommended limits.

Should I Expect Any Side Effects?

As with all medicines, some patients may experience unwanted effects when taking a medicine. Because of the way Rivaroxaban works most of these unwanted effects relate to bruising and bleeding. The more common unwanted effects of Rivaroxaban are:

- Nosebleeds
- Bleeding from the stomach or bowel
- Stomach ache
- Frequent loose or liquid bowel movements
- Indigestion
- Feeling sick

Can I Take Other Medicines

You should not take any other medicines on your own without checking with your doctor or pharmacist. Check before you start any medicine including medicines such as painkillers, or cough or cold remedies. Because Rivaroxaban is a relatively new medicine we may not be aware of all the effects other medicines can have on it.

In Conclusion

Anticoagulants have been prescribed for your present problem and must be taken as directed by your doctor. NEVER share this medication or any other prescribed medicine with anyone.

Keep away from children - Keep all medicines out of the reach of any child.

Keep your medicines in the original packaging so there is less chance of taking the wrong medicine.

If your doctor tells you to stop taking your Rivaroxaban, do as directed. If there are any remaining tablets return them to a pharmacy so they can be disposed of safely.

If any of the information in this leaflet worries you or if you would like more details please ask your doctor or pharmacist but do not stop taking your medication unless you are bleeding or otherwise ill as described in the leaflet.

If you would like this leaflet in a different format, for example, in large print, or on audiotape, or for people with learning disabilities, please contact:

Patient and Customer Services, Poplar Suite, Stepping Hill Hospital. Tel: 0161 419 5678
Information Leaflet. Email: PCS@stockport.nhs.uk.

A free interpreting Service is available if you need help with this information. Please telephone the Lips Service on 0161 922 5149 or E-mail: tam-pct.lips@nhs.net	English
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Smoking is not allowed anywhere on our sites. Please read our leaflet 'Policy on Smoke Free NHS Premises' to find out more.

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