

Direct oral anticoagulation (DOAC) therapy - Apixaban for atrial fibrillation (AF)

Patient Information

What is Apixaban?

Apixaban is a clot preventing drug. A blood clot is a lump of blood that can form inside your body. Apixaban reduces the chance of clots forming that can lead to a stroke. You are taking it because you have an irregular rhythm in the heart, known as atrial fibrillation (AF).

How much do I take?

You should take one tablet twice daily. This may be 2.5mg or 5mg. Your healthcare professional will tell you.

How do I take it?

Take it at the same time every day. Try and take doses 12 hours apart. Take with a glass of water.

How long will I take it?

It depends on your health and history. Many people take apixaban for life.

If you forget a dose?

If you remember within six hours take the missed tablet. If you remember after six hours do not take a tablet. Take the next tablet when it is next due. Do not take an extra tablet to make up for a missed dose. The next day, continue with your usual dose.

Tip: use a pill box or set a phone alarm.

If you often forget tablets

Missing tablets raises your risk of another clot. Speak to your healthcare professional for help.

Dental work or operations

Tell your healthcare team before any operation or dental treatment. They will decide what to do about your apixaban before and after your procedure. You should get clear instructions, both spoken and written, about what to stop and when.

Each case is different. It's important to follow their advice to avoid your procedure being cancelled or having serious bleeding.

Side effects?

Important: bleeding or bruising

The main side effect is unexpected bleeding or bruising (about 1-2 in 100 people).

Call 999 or go to the Emergency Department if you have:

- a nosebleed that lasts over 10 minutes
- bleeding that will not stop
- blood in vomit or spit
- bleeding gums
- pink or brown wee (urine)
- black or bloody poo
- a sudden, very bad headache
- a hit to the head

Other common effects

Heavier periods can happen. If worried, contact your doctor or clinic.

Some people feel sick (nausea), have diarrhoea, or heartburn. If these carry on, contact your GP or clinic.

Can bleeding be reversed?

Serious bleeding in the gut can be reversed.

There is no specific reversal for some other bleeding sites. In those cases, doctors use supportive measures.

Will I need blood tests?

Your kidneys should be checked before you start and then at least once a year if you keep taking it.

If you get kidney problems (infection or abnormal tests), contact your clinic or doctor. Your dose may need to change.

Other medicines

Your team will review your medicines before you start.

Always tell your doctor or pharmacist if your medicines change, if you buy over-the-counter tablets, or if you want to take herbal remedies.

Avoid aspirin or ibuprofen unless your doctor prescribes them (they can increase bleeding).

For pain, paracetamol (and sometimes codeine) is usually advised.

Tell all healthcare staff you take apixaban (including your dentist).

Keep an up-to-date list of your medicines.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Apixaban is not recommended if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

If you want to get pregnant, talk to your doctor first.

If your period is a week late, do a pregnancy test. If positive, contact your doctor urgently. If negative, test again after a few days. If still negative and your period does not start, seek advice.

Alcohol

Apixaban does not interact with alcohol. Drink in moderation and stay within UK guidelines.

Apixaban checklist

Please do:

- report any bleeding or bruising
- take the prescribed dose
- eat a healthy, normal diet
- carry your anticoagulant alert card
- give your alert card to your doctor/nurse/dentist/pharmacist at each visit
- attend all clinic appointments

Please do NOT:

- take aspirin or medicines with aspirin unless prescribed
- take ibuprofen or similar medicines unless prescribed
- miss doses unless your doctor tells you to
- take an extra dose
- run out of tablets - order more before you are low

Questions?

In hospital:

Speak to your healthcare professional.

At home:

Contact the department that started apixaban or speak to a pharmacist at your local pharmacy.

Video

Scan the QR code below to watch a video about apixaban.



Or watch here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kmsDORRU_0

To read this leaflet in a different language,
please visit our website: www.uhd.nhs.uk/visit/patient-information-leaflets
and use the language and accessibility function available along the top of the site.

To ask for this leaflet in larger print, please contact the patient experience team on **0300 019 8499**
or email uhd.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

The Royal Bournemouth Hospital, Castle Lane East, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH7 7DW
Poole Hospital, Longfleet Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2JB
Christchurch Hospital, Fairmile Road, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 2JX

Author: **Faye Thornton** and **Hayley Flavell** Date: **April 2026** Version: **One** Review date: **April 2029** Ref: **007/26**

w: www.uhd.nhs.uk  @UHDTrust  @uhd_nhs

Some of our hospital services are moving.
Visit www.uhd.nhs.uk/future to find out more.