

Direct oral anticoagulation (DOAC) therapy following surgery for prevention of blood clots

Patient Information

What is a direct oral anticoagulant?

Direct oral anticoagulants are clot-preventing drugs, known as DOACs for short.

A blood clot is a lump of blood that can form inside your body. DOACs do not break a clot down, but reduce the chances of a clot forming.

You are taking it because you had a surgical procedure that increases the chance of a clot forming.

What have I been prescribed?

Either apixaban or rivaroxaban.

How much do I take?

Apixaban: take one 2.5mg tablet, twice a day.

Rivaroxaban: take one 10mg tablet, once a day.

How do I take it?

Take it at the same time every day.

Apixaban: try to take doses 12 hours apart. Take with a glass of water.

Rivaroxaban: try to take doses 24 hours apart.

How long will I take it?

Durations are as follows, though may vary:

Hip replacement: 35 days.

Knee replacement: 14 days.

Urology surgery (bladder and urinary system): 28 days.

For any other indication, your healthcare team will inform you.

If different your healthcare team will inform you.

If you forget a dose:

Apixaban

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.

Rivaroxaban

Take the missed tablet as soon as you remember that day.

Do not take an extra tablet to make up for a missed dose.

The next day, continue with one tablet once a day.

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

If you often forget tablets

Missing tablets raises your risk of developing a 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 DOAC 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 is 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) or get 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 will have been checked before you start the medication. As you are only taking it for a short period you will not need any further blood tests.

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, take the medications prescribed for you after your surgery.

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

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

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

These medications are not recommended if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

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

They do not interact with alcohol. Drink in moderation and stay within UK guidelines.

Checklist

Please do:

- report any bleeding or unexpected bruising
- take the prescribed dose
- eat a healthy, normal diet
- carry your anticoagulant alert card

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

Questions?

In hospital:

Speak to your healthcare professional.

At home:

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

Video

Scan the QR code below to watch a video about this medication:



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