

# Treatment with Apixaban

*Eliquis*

*This handout explains the medicine rivaroxaban, a drug that helps prevent blood clots.*

## What is apixaban?

Apixaban (brand name Apixaban) is an anticoagulant medication. “Anti” means against, and “coagulant” refers to blood clotting. An anticoagulant helps prevent clots from forming in your blood.

Although rivaroxaban is sometimes called a “blood-thinner,” it works by blocking the part of your blood that normally forms clots. It does not make your blood thinner.

## Why am I taking apixaban?

Your doctor has prescribed apixaban to prevent harmful blood clots from forming. Many conditions can cause blood clots to form. For example, they can occur in people who have a heart condition called atrial fibrillation.

In atrial fibrillation, part of the heart does not beat the way it should. This can make blood clots form within the heart. Parts of these clots can break off and travel to the brain.

Blood clots can also form after surgery, including surgery to replace a hip or knee. Apixaban is used to prevent these kinds of clots from forming.

Apixaban is also used to treat clots that have already formed in the veins of your legs (deep vein thrombosis), or in your lungs (pulmonary embolism), and to lower the risk of clots forming again.

## How does apixaban work?

Many things must happen inside the body for a blood clot to form. Natural parts of the blood called clotting factors are involved in each step of this process.

Apixaban blocks the clotting factor called fact Xa. This keeps clots from forming.

Apixaban can help stop clots from forming and can keep clots

Apixaban (Eliquis) is a medicine that is used to lower the risk of stroke in people who have atrial fibrillation. It is also used to treat blood clots in the legs and lungs, and to prevent blood clots after surgery.

from getting larger. But, it does not break up clots that already exist.

Your dose of apixaban may depend on your age, weight, kidney function, and other medicines you are taking. **Your doctor will decide which dose is right for you.**

## How long does it take for apixaban to work?

Apixaban begins to reduce blood clotting within a few hours after taking the first dose. If you stop taking apixaban, its effects on clotting begin to wear off within 24 hours for most people.

## How much apixaban should I take?

Apixaban comes in 5 mg and 2.5 mg tablets. The dose will depend on your age, weight, and how well your kidneys are working, as well as other medicines you take. Your doctor will decide which dose is right for you. Apixaban is taken two times a day.

These are the most common doses:

- 5 mg twice daily
- 2.5 mg twice daily

## How should I take apixaban?

Take apixaban exactly as prescribed by your doctor, and at the same time each day, in the morning and at night.

- You can take apixaban tablets with or without food.
- Do **not** chew the tablets. Swallow the tablet whole with a drink of water.
- Do **not** stop taking apixaban unless your doctor tells you to.

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

Try not to miss any doses of apixaban. If you do miss a dose:

- Take it as soon as you remember. Take your other daily dose at its usual time. Then, keep taking your usual dose of 1 tablet 2 times a day.
- Do **not** take 2 tablets at the same time to make up for a dose you missed.
- If you take too much apixaban, call your doctor **right away** or go to nearest emergency room.

- If you take rivaroxaban twice a

## Refills

Do **not** run out of apixaban. Refill your prescription before you run out. The clot-fighting effects of apixaban begin to wear off in about 24 hours.

## When to Call Your Doctor

**Call your doctor or go to the nearest emergency room right away if you have any of these symptoms:**

- Sudden weakness in an arm or leg
- Sudden numbness or tingling anywhere in your body
- Changes in eyesight or not being able to see out of one or both eyes
- Suddenly having slurred speech or not being able to speak
- Dizziness or faintness
- New pain, swelling, redness, or heat in your arm, leg, or foot
- New shortness of breath or chest pain

Apixaban does not require any routine blood testing.

## Do I need to have my blood tested while taking apixaban?

You do **not** need to have routine blood testing to check the amount of apixaban in your body. But, the dose of apixaban is based on how well your kidneys are working. Because of this, your doctor may want you to have a blood test from time to time to check the health of your kidneys.

## What are the side effects of apixaban?

### Bleeding

The most common and serious side effect of rivaroxaban is bleeding. Rivaroxaban can cause bleeding that can sometimes lead to death.

Very minor bleeding may occur. This is normal, and it may cause any of the symptoms from time to time:

- Gums bleeding when you brush your teeth
- Nosebleeds
- Easy bruising

- More bleeding than normal from small cuts
- For women, longer or heavier menstrual bleeding

**Call your doctor or come to the hospital emergency room right away if you:**

- Have a serious fall or hit your head
- Haven of these symptoms of **major bleeding**
  - bleeding in your eyes
  - red or dark brown urine
  - red or black tarry stool
  - vomiting or coughing up blood
  - severe headache or stomachache
  - bruises that appear for now known reason
  - nosebleeds, bleeding gums, or unusual bleeding that keeps happening
  - any bleeding that does not stop or is very heavy

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**There is currently no medicine can reverse the effects of apixaban if you start to bleed. Your doctor will treat you with blood transfusions and other methods.**

## **Does apixaban affect how any other medicines work?**

You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take rivaroxaban and other medicines that also lower the blood's ability to form clots. Some of these medicines are:

- Aspirin or products that contain aspirin, such as Robaxisal, Alka-Seltzer, Nyquil, and Pepto-Bismol
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, and others) celecoxib (Celebrex), diclofenac (Voltaren), indomethacin (Indocin), ketoprofen (Orudis), meloxicam (Mobicox), naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn), and others
- Warfarin (Coumadin)
- Any medicine containing heparin
- Clopidogrel (Plavix), prasugrel (Effient), ticagrelor (Brilinta)
- Dabigatran (Pradaxa), rivaroxaban (Xarelto)

Call your doctor or the anticoagulation clinic whenever you start or stop any prescription or over-the-counter medicine, herbal product, or vitamin supplement.

Drug interaction with apixaban can increase your risk of bleeding

### **Other drugs may also affect how apixaban works in your body.**

It is very important to tell your doctor or anticoagulation clinic whenever you start or stop any medicine. This includes medicines you can buy without a prescription, herbal products, and vitamins.

### **Is it safe to drink alcohol while taking rivaroxaban?**

It is best to avoid alcohol while taking apixaban. This is because it can increase the risk of bleeding in your stomach and intestines.

If you do drink alcohol, do not have more than 1 drink a day, and no more than 2 drinks at a time, every now and then. (One drink = 1 beer, or 1 glass of wine, or 1 cocktail, or 1 shot).

### **Do I need to avoid eating certain foods while taking rivaroxaban?**

You can eat all types of foods if you take apixaban. There are no eating restrictions.

### **Should I limit activities while taking apixaban?**

Since apixaban increases your risk of bleeding:

- Avoid activities that could cause an injury. It is usually safe to walk, jog, swim, and working in the garden
- Tell your doctor or anticoagulation clinic pharmacist what your current activities are. They will tell you if it is safe to keep doing these while taking apixaban.

### **Pregnancy**

Apixaban has not been studied in pregnant women. If you become pregnant or plan to become pregnant while taking apixaban, call your doctor **right away** to talk about alternative options.