

Apixaban (Eliquis)

What are anticoagulants?

Anticoagulants are medicines that prevent the blood from clotting as quickly as normal. Some people refer to anticoagulants as 'blood thinners'. The blood is not actually made any thinner – it just takes longer to clot whilst you are taking anticoagulants

What is Apixaban?

Apixaban is an anticoagulant that helps to prevent blood clots from forming by blocking Factor Xa, which is an important component of blood clotting. This medicine has been approved by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and accepted by the Scottish Medical Consortium (SMC) for:

- *prevention of blood clots in patients who have undergone hip and knee replacement surgery*
- *prevention of stroke in patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation*
- *the treatment of pulmonary embolism (PE) and the prevention of recurrent Deep Vein thrombosis (DVT) and PE*
- *Treatment and secondary prevention of Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and Pulmonary Embolism (PE)*

Can anyone take Apixaban?

No, not everyone can take this medicine and your healthcare professional will discuss the benefits and risk of this treatment when considering which anticoagulant therapy would be the most effective for your condition.

How is Apixaban different from Warfarin?

Both Apixaban and Warfarin are oral anticoagulants. Apixaban is a factor Xa inhibitor and warfarin is a vitamin K antagonist. This means that they work on different parts of the clotting mechanisms. Apixaban is taken twice daily, usually morning and evening. The dose will depend on the condition you are being treated for.

Do I need to have regular blood tests with Apixaban?

No, Apixaban does not need regular blood tests to monitor your blood clotting levels, however, you should have a blood test to monitor your kidney function before starting Apixaban and then once a year thereafter. If you experience any bleeding or side effects, you should tell your health care professional.

What is the normal dose of Apixaban or how is Apixaban prescribed?

Apixaban comes in doses of 2.5mg and 5mg and is taken twice a day usually in the morning and evening. Your doctor will advise on the appropriate dose for your condition and for how long you must continue treatment. It is important that the medicine is taken at the same time each day to ensure optimum protection. It can be taken with or without food.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

Apixaban has a shorter duration of action compared to warfarin. This means it does not stay in your body as long as warfarin, so it's important to take it regularly and not miss any doses. If you forget to take Apixaban, take the tablet as soon as you remember on that day and take the next tablet of Apixaban at the usual time and then continue as normal. Do not double up on doses. Do not take two tablets together. If you are not sure what to do or have missed more than one dose, speak to your doctor, pharmacist or anticoagulation nurse.

Do I need to follow a special diet for Apixaban?

No, Apixaban does not have any special dietary instructions or requirements

Does Apixaban interact with other medications?

Yes, there are some medications that may interact with Apixaban; however, these are far fewer than with warfarin. Talk to your healthcare professional about any other medication you are taking before starting Apixaban and always let them know when you start or stop any other medications. Always tell the pharmacist that you are taking Apixaban if you are buying over the counter medicines or complementary treatments

What are the side effects of Apixaban?

All medicines have the potential to cause side effects for some people.

You should read the patient information leaflet that you will find in the box of Apixaban. With all anticoagulants, the major side effect can be bleeding.



Apixaban Continued

Tell your healthcare professional if you experience any of the following:

- *Bloody black or tarry stools (poo)*
- *Blood in the urine*
- *Coughing up or vomiting blood or material that looks like coffee grounds*
- *Nose bleeds*
- *Bleeding from the gums*
- *Unusual or extensive bruising and swelling*
- *Vaginal bleeding*
- *Nausea (feeling sick)*
- *Anaemia which can cause tiredness or paleness*

What if I need to have surgery or a procedure?

You should tell anyone who is treating you that you are taking Apixaban; this includes dentists, chiropodists, physiotherapists, osteopaths, and other therapists.

If you need a surgery or procedure, make sure that you advise the doctor or surgeon well in advance that you are taking Apixaban and for what condition. You may be advised to stop taking your Apixaban for a short time and you will be advised when to start again.

DO NOT STOP TAKING THIS MEDICATION WITHOUT FIRST TALKING TO OUR DOCTOR.

Is there a reversal agent for Apixaban?

A reversal agent is currently being developed. As Apixaban has a shorter duration of action compared to warfarin, it does not stay in your body as long as warfarin. If you have a bleeding problem or need to have urgent surgery, the doctor will stop you taking Apixaban and stop the bleeding in other ways.

Carrying a medical identification card

It is always advisable to carry some sort of identification so that in the event of you being unable to, it will let others know that you are taking an anticoagulant. The manufacturer of Apixaban may provide an alert card.

There are a variety of items available to buy which highlight that you are on anticoagulation therapy, these include credit card size alert cards, medic alert necklaces and bracelets.

YOUR DONATION CAN HELP US TO HELP OTHERS AND TO PREVENT BLOOD CLOTS.
PLEASE DONATE AT:
www.anticoagulationuk.org/donate

Things to remember when taking Apixaban?

DO

- *DO take apixaban exactly as your doctor tells you.*
- *DO tell your doctor and pharmacist about all other medications you are taking.*
- *DO tell your doctor when you get sick or injured, or have bleeding that is more severe than you expect.*
- *DO keep apixaban (and all other medications) out of the reach of children.*
- *DO tell your doctor if you are pregnant or are planning to get pregnant.*
- *DO tell all healthcare providers (e.g., doctors, dentists and pharmacists) that you are taking apixaban.*
- *DO refill your prescription BEFORE running out of apixaban.*
- *DO remember to take your apixaban (and other medications) when you travel.*
- *DO consider wearing a Medic Alert bracelet or carrying a wallet card that states that you are taking apixaban.*

DO NOT

- *DO NOT take apixaban if you are pregnant or plan to get pregnant without contacting your doctor.*
- *DO NOT change the dose of apixaban on your own.*
- *DO NOT stop apixaban on your own even if you feel well*



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