



# Dabigatran (Pradaxa)

## 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 Dabigatran (Pradaxa)?

Dabigatran is an oral anticoagulant. It is a direct thrombin inhibitor (DOAC) and helps to prevent blood clots from forming by interfering with thrombin which is an important component of blood clotting. Dabigatran is taken twice daily, usually morning and evening. The dose will depend on the condition you are being treated for.

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 having 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 Dabigatran?

**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.

## Do I need to have regular blood tests with Dabigatran?

**No**, Dabigatran does not need regular blood tests to monitor your clotting levels, however, you should have a blood test to monitor your kidney function before starting Dabigatran. Your healthcare professional will advise of the recommended review period for this treatment. If you experience any bleeding or side effects, it is important to notify your doctor immediately.

## What is the dose of Dabigatran?

Dabigatran comes in doses of 75mg and 110 mg and is taken twice a day usually in the morning and evening. Your doctor will advise on the appropriate dose for your specific condition and will tell you how long you must continue treatment for.

It is important that the medicine is taken at the same time each day (every 12 hours) to ensure optimum protection. Dabigatran can be taken with or without food, but it may help you to remember to take it if you do so at mealtimes. The capsule must be swallowed whole with water and not chewed or crushed. The medicine is sensitive to moisture and must be kept in the original packaging provided and stored at room temperature. The tablets can be stored in pillboxes or pill organisers provided that they also remain in their foil packaging.

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

Dabigatran has a short duration of action. This means it does not stay in your body as long as some other anticoagulants, so it's important to take it regularly and not miss any doses. If you have been given Dabigatran to prevent a blood clot after knee and hip surgery, you can continue with your remaining daily doses at the same time of the next day. When being treated for atrial fibrillation or prevention of blood clots recurring in legs or lungs, you can take a forgotten dose up to 6 hours prior to the next due dose. A missed dose should be omitted if the remaining time is below 6 hours prior to next due dose.

**Do not double up on doses. If you are not sure what to do or have missed more than one dose, speak to your doctor or pharmacist (chemist) as soon as possible. It is important to take this drug regularly and it may help set up alert reminders on your phone for example.**

## Do I need to follow a special diet for Dabigatran?

**No**, Dabigatran does not have any special dietary instructions or requirements

## Does Dabigatran interact with other medications?

**Yes**, there are some medications that may interact with Dabigatran; however, these are far fewer than some other anticoagulants. Talk to your healthcare professional about any other medication you are taking before starting Dabigatran and always let them know when you start or stop any other medications.



# Dabigatran Continued

Always tell the pharmacist that you are taking Dabigatran if you are buying over the counter medicines or complementary therapies.

## What are the side effects of Dabigatran?

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 Dabigatran tablets. With all anticoagulants, the major side effect can be bleeding.

Tell your healthcare professional if you experience any of the following or any other symptoms whilst taking this medication:

- Indigestion, upset stomach or burning sensation
- Bloody, black or tarry motions when you go to the toilet
- Unusual or unexpected bruising
- Blood in the urine
- Any unexpected, severe or uncontrollable bleeding, or bleeding that lasts a long time
- Coughing up or vomiting blood or material that looks like coffee grounds
- Vaginal bleeding that is not a normal period
- Nausea (feeling sick) headaches or feeling dizzy or weak
- Anaemia which can cause tiredness or paleness

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## What if I need to have surgery or a procedure?

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

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

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

## Is there a reversal agent for Dabigatran?

**Yes**, Dabigatran has a reversal agent called Praxbind (idarucizumab) for the rapid reversal of anticoagulation effects if you need emergency surgery or an urgent procedure or if you have life threatening or uncontrolled bleeding.

## 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 the medicine may provide an alert card.

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



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