

Patient information

Apixaban

Apixaban is a type of medicine known as an anticoagulant.

It makes your blood flow through your veins more easily, which means your blood is less likely to clot.

It's used to treat people who have a health problem caused by a blood clot, such as a Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or a Pulmonary Embolism (PE) which is a blood clot in the lung.

Key facts

- You'll usually take apixaban twice a day – approximately 12 hours apart.
- You can take it with or without food.
- The most common side effect of apixaban is bleeding more easily than normal, such as having nosebleeds, heavier periods, bleeding gums and bruising.
- Your doctor or pharmacist will give you an anticoagulant alert card. Always carry this with you. Show your doctor or dentist before you have surgery or dental treatment.
- It is important that they know you're taking apixaban as it may put you at risk of bleeding.
- You can drink alcohol while taking apixaban. But heavy drinking, especially binge drinking, can increase the effect of the apixaban and make you more likely to bleed.

How to take it

- You'll usually take apixaban tablets twice a day. Try to take it at the same time every day.
- Swallow the tablet with a drink of water. Apixaban can be taken with or without food.

How long to take it for

- How long you need to take apixaban will depend on why you're taking it.
- If you are taking apixaban for a blood clot – Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) you will need to take this for between 3-6 months. If you have had a previous DVT or a

Pulmonary embolism (PE) it will be recommended that you take apixaban for the rest of your life to help prevent further blood clots.

- If you are advised to continue apixaban for the rest of your life you will need a review with your GP at least once a year, this is to check the risks for bleeding against the risks for another DVT/PE. The review should also check for interactions with medications and include blood tests.

Forgotten doses

- If you forget a dose, then **midnight** is the cut of point.
- Take your medicine as soon as you remember unless it's nearly time for your next dose.
- In this case, skip the missed dose and take your next dose at the usual time.

Do not take two doses to make up for a missed dose.

It is important that you remember to take apixaban every day.

If you take too much

- Taking too much apixaban puts you at risk of bleeding.
- If you take too much call 111 or go to your nearest Emergency Department – get someone else to drive, you or call an ambulance.

Other medications and Apixaban

Some medications can affect how apixaban works. This can lead to serious side effects, including increased risk of bleeding or reduced effectiveness of your medications including apixaban.

- Other anticoagulants such as warfarin
- Anti-fungal or antibiotics such as fluconazole, erythromycin, rifampicin, and clarithromycin
- Epileptic medication such as carbamazepine, phenytoin, or phenobarbital.
- Non-steroidal medications such as ibuprofen, naproxen, and aspirin
- There are interactions with herbal medications such as St John's wort, glucosamine and those that contain fish oils such as cod liver oil.
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We advise that if you want to take supplements/herbal remedies that you take the alert card with you and discuss with a pharmacist.

What if I am unable to take the Apixaban

- If you develop a vomiting bug and are unable to absorb the apixaban due to vomiting or diarrhoea, then please inform your GP and they will arrange for the anticoagulation to be switched to an injectable form of anticoagulation.

Side effects

Less serious bleeding

It's usual to bleed more easily than normal while you're taking apixaban.

- Periods are heavier than normal and last longer than usual.
- Bleeding a little longer than usual if you cut yourself.
- Nosebleeds – those last less than 10 minutes
- Bleeding from your gums when you brush your teeth.
- Bruises that come more easily and take a little longer to fade.

If this happens, keep taking the apixaban, but tell your doctor if the bleeding bothers you.

More serious bleeding

- If you have red urine or black stool
- You get bruises that happen for no reason that are larger than you'd expect or keep growing.
- Contact GP or call 111 and stop your apixaban until you are told to restart it.
- If you get nosebleeds that are lasting longer than 10 minutes despite you trying to stop it.
- You have blood in your vomit or you're coughing up blood.
- You get severe headaches, loss of vision, blurred vision, seizures, or numbness in your hands or feet.

Call 999 or go to the Emergency Department. Do not drive yourself.

If you feel that you are having a reaction to the medication such as swelling to the lips or throat, rapid breathing /unable to breathe properly, if you become pale or drowsy and develop a rash– do not take any further Apixaban and call 999.

If you have any significant knocks to the head – attend the Emergency Department for consideration of CT head scan.

If discover that you are pregnant or plan to get pregnant while you are on Apixaban, please inform your GP. Apixaban is not licensed for use in pregnancy or if you are breastfeeding.

Visit www.nhs.uk/medicines/apixaban if there is anything else you require to know about this medication. This is just a brief out-line of some of the most important information about Apixaban.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities, please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)
<https://www.accessable.co.uk>



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