

Apixaban for the treatment of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE)

Information for patients

This leaflet provides information about a medicine you have been prescribed called apixaban, including the risks and the benefits. If you have any queries or concerns, please speak to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

What is apixaban and what is it used for?

- Apixaban is an anticoagulant medicine. This type of medicine is sometimes called a blood- thinning medication, although it does not actually make your blood thinner.
- Anticoagulants reduce the risk of blood clots developing and prevent an existing blood clot from growing.





Why have I been prescribed apixaban?

You have been diagnosed with a clot in the veins of your leg(s) (deep vein thrombosis/DVT) or a clot in the blood vessels of the lungs (pulmonary embolism/PE).

Apixaban is used to reduce your chance of developing new clots.

How do I take apixaban?

- Take it at the same time each day.
- You can take it with or without food.
- You do not need to avoid any particular food.
- If you have been newly diagnosed with a blood clot, at first you need to take **two 5mg (10mg) tablets twice a day** about 12 hours apart. Take each dose at the same times each day for **one** week.
- After this, take **one 5mg twice a day**.

<u>At first</u>	<u>Then</u>
Morning: 	Morning: 
Evening: 	Evening: 
<p>10 mg twice a day for one week</p>	<p>5mg twice a day</p>

- It is very important that you take apixaban as advised. Missing doses may increase the chance of the clot growing or new clots forming
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. But do not take double your dose to make up for a missed dose.

How long do I need to take apixaban for?

Some patients need to take it for between three and six months and then it is safe for them to stop.

Some patients need to take apixaban long term. The doctor looking after you will decide how long you need to take apixaban for.

What happens if I need to take apixaban long term?

After you have taken apixaban for six months, your doctor will decide whether it is best for you to stay on apixaban long term.

They will then decide what dose is most suitable for you, depending on the risk of you developing a new clot. The dose will be either 2.5mg or 5mg twice a day.

What are the risks?

Bleeding is a possible side effect of taking **any** anticoagulant and occasionally it can be serious. Serious bleeding affects one to three people out of 100.

Seek medical help straight away if you have bleeding, especially if you have any of the following:

- coughing or vomiting blood
- black stools or blood in your stools
- severe, persistent headache, dizziness or weakness
- fall or injury to your head or face
- blood in your urine
- unexplained or severe bruising
- persistent nose bleeds
- other unexpected or uncontrollable bleeding

If you have any concerns about these risks, your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will discuss these with you in more detail.

What are the benefits?

It cuts your risk of developing deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolism again and the complications caused by these conditions.

Are there any alternatives?

There are other anticoagulants you may be able to take. Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will discuss these with you, if appropriate.

Do I need blood tests when taking apixaban?

You will have blood tests before you start apixaban and then at least once a year after that time, if you stay on apixaban long term. You may occasionally need specialist blood tests, on your doctor's advice.

Can I take other medicines with apixaban?

It is important to let the doctor, nurse or pharmacist who prescribes apixaban know all the other medicines you are currently taking. This includes any medicines you buy over the counter, because they might interfere with apixaban and affect how it works.

You should avoid anti-inflammatory medicines including ibuprofen as these can increase the risk of bleeding. You should also avoid aspirin unless you have been advised to continue by your doctor. If you are not able to use paracetamol, please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist for advice.

If you start a new medicine, please tell the doctor that you are taking apixaban.

If you are unsure about whether you can take a particular medicine with apixaban, please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist for advice.

What else do I need to know when taking apixaban?

- Your risk of bleeding is increased – please take this into account before considering taking part in activities with a high risk of injury such as contact sports.
- It is not known if apixaban is safe to use during pregnancy. If you become pregnant or plan to become pregnant, tell your doctor straight away.
- To reduce your risks of bleeding during surgery, minor procedures or dental work, please tell your doctor or dentist that you are on apixaban. You may need to stop taking it for a short time.
- The anticoagulation clinic will give you an alert card. Carry this in your wallet or purse to make sure people know you are taking an anticoagulant.

How do I find out more about apixaban?

Please ask your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or anticoagulation clinic for more information.

You can also call King's College Hospital anticoagulation clinics:

King's College Hospital, tel **020 3299 5553**

Princess Royal University Hospital, tel **01689 864263**

How do I find out more about deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolism?

Please ask your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or anticoagulation clinic for more information.

You can also visit the Thrombosis UK website for further information: thrombosisuk.org/

Sharing your information

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has partnered with Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust through the King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas' hospitals. King's College Hospital and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trusts share an electronic patient record system, which means

information about your health record can be accessed safely and securely by health and care staff at both Trusts. For more information visit www.kch.nhs.uk.

Care provided by students

King's is a teaching hospital where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS:

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND.

Tel: 01689 863252

Email: kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net