

## Further information

There are a range of patient organisations that can give you further information and support.

Atrial Fibrillation Association  
Tel: 01789 451 837  
Website: [www.afa.org.uk](http://www.afa.org.uk)  
Email: [info@afa.org.uk](mailto:info@afa.org.uk)

Anticoagulation UK  
Tel: 020 8289 6875  
Website: [www.anticoagulationuk.org](http://www.anticoagulationuk.org)  
Email: [info@anticoagulationuk.org](mailto:info@anticoagulationuk.org)

Arrhythmia Alliance  
Tel: 01789 450 787  
Website: [www.heartrhythmcharity.org.uk](http://www.heartrhythmcharity.org.uk)  
Email: [info@heartrhythmcharity.org.uk](mailto:info@heartrhythmcharity.org.uk)

Stroke Association  
Helpline: 0303 3033 100  
Website: [www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)

British Heart Foundation  
Tel: 0300 330 3322  
Website: [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

The British Cardiac Patients Association  
Tel: 01223 846 845  
Website: [www.bcpa.uk](http://www.bcpa.uk)

Lifeblood: The Thrombosis Charity  
Tel: 01558 650222  
Website: [www.thrombosis-charity.org.uk](http://www.thrombosis-charity.org.uk)

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# Non-vitamin K Antagonist Oral Anticoagulant (NOAC) Patient Information Booklet

This booklet is for patients taking apixaban (Eliquis), dabigatran (Pradaxa), edoxaban (Lixiana) or rivaroxaban (Xarelto) for:

- Reducing the risk of stroke or systemic embolism in atrial fibrillation (AF)
- Treatment or to reduce the risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE)
- Reducing the risk of another heart attack following an acute coronary syndrome (ACS)



**Derby and Derbyshire**  
Clinical Commissioning Group

## Important information for patients taking NOACs

### Introduction

This booklet has been given to you because you have been prescribed a medicine known as a NOAC. A healthcare professional will go through this book with you, explain what it all means and answer any questions you may have.

### How to use this booklet

The booklet provides you with important information about your treatment and information about where to go for further advice. It should remain in your home for easy reference.

An 'Alert Card' is also provided, which you should fill in and carry with you at all times. This identifies that you take a NOAC, which may be important in an emergency and to inform healthcare professionals before you receive other treatment.

### NOACs

NOACs help to prevent harmful blood clots from forming in your blood vessels by making your blood take longer to clot, or by affecting the way in which clotting occurs.

The four NOACs available are apixaban (Eliquis), dabigatran (Pradaxa), edoxaban (Lixiana) and rivaroxaban (Xarelto) and each of these has slight differences in the way in which it is taken. It is important that you know which NOAC you have been prescribed and that you read the patient information leaflet provided with the medication.

The NOAC you are taking is called: \_\_\_\_\_

It has been prescribed for: \_\_\_\_\_

The dose is: \_\_\_\_\_

## What happens if I need dental treatment or an operation whilst I am taking a NOAC?

Tell your doctor or dentist before any operation or dental treatment. You may need to temporarily stop taking your NOAC because it increases the risk of bleeding.

**You will have been given a patient alert card which you should carry with you at all times.**

### Pregnancy and breastfeeding

The manufacturers of apixaban (Eliquis), edoxaban (Lixiana) and rivaroxaban (Xarelto) advise that they should be avoided during pregnancy and breastfeeding. The manufacturer of dabigatran (Pradaxa) advises that it should be avoided during breastfeeding and should be avoided during pregnancy unless essential.

Women who are on NOACs should discuss plans for future pregnancy with their doctor before trying to conceive, wherever possible. Women who think they have become pregnant while on a NOAC should seek a pregnancy test as soon as possible and, if this is positive, an urgent appointment with a doctor.

### Where can I get more advice?

If you have any further questions, or need more information about anything in this booklet, you should ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. The hospital may also have given you a phone number in case you have any problems.

For more general information there is a list of organisations overleaf.

## Will I be monitored during treatment?

Unlike warfarin, NOACs do not need regular blood tests. However, you will need a blood test to check your kidney function, liver function and a full blood count before starting treatment. These tests need to be repeated at least once a year, possibly as often as every 12 weeks. The doctor or nurse may wish to see you every 12 weeks to make sure that your tablets are still suiting you.

## Can I take other medications?

Some medications interact with NOACs. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medications, including medicines that you have bought for yourself and any herbal remedies you may be taking. You should not take aspirin unless it has specifically been prescribed by your GP. It is also advisable to avoid other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like diclofenac or ibuprofen.

Please note that some of these can be bought over the counter in pharmacies with names such as Nurofen®. Paracetamol and codeine-based painkillers are acceptable, although be aware that some paracetamol 'plus' products contain aspirin.

## Can I drink alcohol whilst taking a NOAC?

NOACs do not interact with alcohol. However, you should always drink in moderation and stay within the recommended guidelines.

## How to take your NOAC

**It is important that you take your NOAC exactly as it has been prescribed. Missing doses may increase your risk of having a stroke, heart attack or another clot. Taking too many can increase your risk of bleeding.**

The dose of NOAC depends on which one you have been prescribed and what you have been given it for. **You must read the pharmacy label and take the tablets exactly as directed.**

The usual doses are:

### Apixaban (Eliquis):

- Atrial fibrillation* - 5mg twice a day (or 2.5mg twice a day if over 80 years old and bodyweight less than 60kg).
- DVT/PE* - 10 mg twice daily for 7 days and then 5mg twice daily.
- DVT/PE prevention* - 2.5 mg twice daily following completion of 6 months of treatment

### Dabigatran (Pradaxa):

- Atrial fibrillation* - 150mg twice a day (or 110mg twice a day if over 80 years, or at a high risk of bleed, or taking verapamil).
- DVT/PE* - 150mg twice a day (or 110mg twice a day if over 80 years, or taking verapamil).

### Edoxaban (Lixiana):

- Atrial fibrillation* - 60mg once daily (or 30mg once daily if bodyweight less than 60kg).
- DVT/PE* - 60mg once daily (or 30mg once daily if bodyweight less than 60kg).

### Rivaroxaban (Xarelto):

- Atrial fibrillation* - 20mg once daily **with food**
- DVT/PE* - 15mg twice daily **with food** for 21 days and then 20mg once daily **with food**.
- DVT/PE prevention* - 10mg once daily following completion of 6 months of treatment
- After ACS* - 2.5mg twice daily.

**Taking the 15mg and 20mg strengths of rivaroxaban on an empty stomach can reduce blood levels and increase the risk of stroke, heart attack or blood clots. Always take with food.**

Whichever NOAC you have been prescribed:

- Take the tablet(s) at the same time(s) each day
- Swallow whole with a glass of water (do not crush)
- Make sure that you do not run out of tablets and always have at least a week's supply.
- **Do not stop taking without discussing it with your doctor first**

## What should I do if I take too much?

If you have taken too many tablets, contact your doctor immediately as taking too many may increase your risk of bleeding. Take the medicine pack with you, even if there are no tablets left.

## Possible side effects

A common side effect of all oral anticoagulants is an increased risk of bleeding. Symptoms include:

- Pain
- Swelling or discomfort
- Headache, dizziness or weakness
- Unusual bruising, nosebleeds, bleeding of gums, cuts that take a long time to stop bleeding
- Menstrual flow or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
- Blood in your urine, which may be pink or brown
- Red or black stools
- Coughing up blood, or vomiting blood or material that looks like coffee grounds

**If you have any symptoms of bleeding, tell your doctor or visit your nearest A&E department immediately.**

A full list of side effects can be found in the leaflet inside your packet of tablets

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

It depends on which NOAC you are taking:

*Apixaban (Eliquis)*: Take the tablet as soon as you remember and take the next tablet of Eliquis at the usual time then continue as normal.

*Dabigatran (pradaxa)*: A forgotten dose can still be taken 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 the next due dose. Do not take a double dose to make up for missed doses.

*Edoxaban (Lixiana)*: Take the dose as soon as you remember. Do not take more than one tablet in a single day to make up for a forgotten dose. Take the next tablet on the following day and then carry on taking one tablet once a day.

*Rivaroxaban (xarelto)*: If you are taking either **one 20 mg tablet once a day** or **one 15 mg tablet once a day** and have missed a dose, take it as soon as you remember. Do not take more than one tablet in a single day to make up for a forgotten dose. Take the next tablet on the following day and then carry on taking one tablet once a day.

If you are taking **one 15 mg tablet twice a day** and have missed a dose, take it as soon as you remember. Do not take more than two 15 mg tablets in a single day. If you forget to take a dose you can take two 15 mg tablets at the same time to get a total of two tablets (30 mg) on one day. On the following day you should carry on taking one 15 mg tablet twice a day.

If you are taking **one 2.5mg tablet twice a day** and you have missed a dose, simply take your next dose at the usual time.

## What should I do if I keep forgetting my tablets?

**Missing tablets will increase your risk of having a stroke, heart attack or another clot. If you have difficulty remembering to take your NOAC you should speak to your doctor or pharmacist who will be able to advise you.**