



DIRECT ORAL ANTICOAGULANT (DOAC) THERAPY

A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Your doctor or health care professional has started you on a blood thinner medication. There are different types of blood thinners. Your blood thinner medication is called a Direct Oral AntiCoagulant, commonly abbreviated as DOAC. DOAC's include:

- Apixaban (Eliquis®)
- Betrixaban (Bevyxxa®)
- Dabigatran (Pradaxa®)
- Edoxaban (Savaysa®)
- Rivaroxban (Xarelto®)

DOAC's are different from other blood thinner medications because they do not require frequent lab checks to adjust the dose. They are also not affected by your diet and foods that contain vitamin K like a different blood thinner, warfarin (Coumadin®), is.

You will need to be careful that you do not do something to hurt yourself and cause bleeding. Your health care professional will work with you to keep you healthy and safe while you are taking a DOAC.

Starting on a new medicine, especially one you may have to take for a long period of time, may make you worry. To help you learn about your medication, your health care professional has given you this booklet to take home and read. The information in the booklet will help you understand why you are taking a blood thinner and how to keep yourself healthy. Please take the time to read all the information in this

booklet. If you have any questions call your health care professional.

You can stay healthy even when you have a health problem that needs special medication. You and your health care professional will work together as a team to make sure that taking a blood thinner medication does not stop you from living well and safely.

ABOUT YOUR BLOOD THINNER

Your health care professional has prescribed a medicine called a blood thinner to prevent or treat blood clots. Blood clots can put you at risk for heart attack, stroke, and other serious medical problems. A blood thinner is a kind of drug called an anticoagulant (an-te-ko-AG-u-lent). "Anti" means against and "coagulant" means to thicken into a gel or solid. Think of syrup being poured-it is sticky and thick and flows slowly. An anticoagulant helps your blood flow easier and not clot. Blood thinner drugs work well when they are used correctly.

Apixaban (Eliquis®), Betrixaban (Bevyxxa®), Dabigatran (Pradaxa®), Edoxaban (Savaysa®), and Rivaroxaban (Xarelto®) will:

- Keep your blood from making clots.
- Help your blood flow easily.



HOW TO TAKE YOUR BLOOD THINNER

Always take your blood thinner medication as directed. Your blood thinner needs to be taken as often as prescribed at the same time(s) of day, every day.

Never skip a dose, and never take a double dose. If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time. Contact your health care professional if you have further questions. If this happens when your health care professional is unavailable, mark your missed dose on your calendar or in a diary. Do not take 2 doses at the same time. A pillbox with time slots for each day may help you keep track of your medicines, except for dabigatran (Pradaxa®) which must be stored in the original container and used within 120 days.

Your blood thinner may be taken with or without other medications. Do not stop taking your medication unless instructed to do so by the health care professional managing your blood thinner.

FOOD AND YOUR BLOOD THINNER

Follow the instructions below for taking your DOAC:

- Apixaban (Eliquis®) can be taken with or without food.
- Betrixaban (Bevvysa®) should be taken with food.
- Dabigatran (Pradaxa®) should be taken with a full glass of water, with or without food, and swallowed whole. Do not chew, open, or crush.
- Edoxaban (Savaysa®) can be taken with or without food.
- Rivaroxaban (Xarelto®) doses greater than 10mg should be taken with food.

LIMIT ALCOHOL

Alcohol can increase your risk of bleeding and falling. Serious problems can occur with alcohol and your blood thinner if you have more than 2 drinks a day.

BLOOD TESTS

Routine blood tests are not needed for DOAC's. Your health care professional may order periodic blood tests to monitor your kidney or liver function. Follow your health care professional's instructions.





SIDE EFFECTS

Side effects with DOAC's are related to how the medicine works. Bleeding is the most common side effect from DOAC's. You might see a little bleeding like bruises on your body or slight gum bleeding when brushing your teeth. If you notice something wrong that you feel may be caused by your medication, call your health care provider.

SLIGHT BLEEDING - you may notice from time to time:

- Gum bleeding while brushing teeth.
- Occasional nosebleed.
- Easy bruising.
- Bleeding after a minor cut that stops within a few minutes.
- Menstrual bleeding that is a little heavier than normal.

MAJOR BLEEDING - call your health care professional or go to the hospital emergency room if you have any of the following:

- Red, dark, coffee or cola colored urine.
- Bowel movements that are red or look like tar.
- Bleeding from the gums or nose that does not stop quickly.
- Vomit that is coffee colored or bright red.
- Anything red in color that you cough up.
- Severe pain, such as a headache or stomachache.
- Sudden appearance of bruises for no reason.
- Menstrual bleeding that is much heavier than normal.
- A cut that will not stop bleeding within 10 minutes.
- A serious fall or hit on the head.
- Dizziness or weakness.

USING OTHER MEDICATIONS

Tell your doctor about every medicine you take, including medicines you used before you started taking a blood thinner. Other medicines can change the way your blood thinner works. Your blood thinner can also change how other medicines work.

It is very important to talk with your doctor about all the medicines you take, including other prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products.

Products that contain aspirin may lessen the blood's ability to form clots and may increase your risk of bleeding when you also are taking a blood thinner. If you are taking a blood thinner, talk to your doctor before taking any medication that has aspirin in it.

Medicines you get over the counter may also interact with your blood thinner. Following is a list of some common medicines that you should talk with your doctor or pharmacist about before using.

Pain relievers, cold medicines, or stomach remedies, such as:

- Excedrin®
- Naproxen (Aleve®)
- Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®, Midol®, Pamprin®HB)

Stomach remedies, such as:

- Bismuth Subsalicylate (Pepto Bismol®)
- Alka-Seltzer®

Herbal products, such as:

- Garlic
- Green tea
- Ginkgo
- St John's Wort

Tell all your doctors about every medication and over-the-counter product that you take.

TALK TO YOUR OTHER DOCTORS

Because you take a blood thinner, you will be seen regularly by the doctor who prescribed the medicine. You may also see other doctors for different problems. When you see other doctors or health care providers, it is very important that you tell them you are taking a blood thinner. You should also tell your dentist and the person who cleans your teeth.

If you use different pharmacies, make sure each pharmacist knows that you take a blood thinner.

Blood thinners can interact with medicines and treatments that other doctors might prescribe for you. If another doctor orders a new medicine or treatment for you, tell the doctor who ordered your blood thinner.



STAY SAFE WHILE TAKING YOUR BLOOD THINNER

Call your doctor and go to the hospital immediately if you have had a fall or hit your head, even if you are not bleeding. You can be bleeding but not see any blood. For example, if you fall and hit your head, bleeding can occur inside your skull. Or, if you hurt your arm during a fall and then notice a large purple bruise, this means you are bleeding under your skin.

Because you are taking a blood thinner, you should try not to hurt yourself and cause bleeding. You need to be careful when you use knives, scissors, razors, or any sharp object that can make you bleed. You may also need to avoid activities and sports that could cause injury. Swimming and walking are safe activities. If you like to ride your bike, be sure you wear a helmet. If you would like to start a new activity that will increase the amount of exercise you get every day, talk to your doctor. If you like to work in the yard, you still can. Just be sure to wear sturdy shoes and gloves to protect yourself.

TO PREVENT INJURY INDOORS:

- Be very careful using knives and scissors.
- Use an electric razor.
- Use a soft toothbrush.
- Use waxed dental floss.
- Do not use toothpicks.
- Wear shoes or non-skid slippers in the house.
- Be careful when you trim your toenails.
- Do not trim corns or calluses yourself.

TO PREVENT INJURY OUTDOORS:

- Always wear shoes.
- Wear gloves when using sharp tools.
- Avoid activities and sports that can easily hurt you.
- Wear gardening gloves when doing yard work.

PREGNANCY AND BREASTFEEDING- WARNING!

DOAC's are not recommended if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Talk to your health care provider if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.

ANTICOAGULATION CLINIC McLAREN BAY REGION WEST CAMPUS

3250 E. Midland Road
Bay City, MI 48706
(989)667-2871

Our clinic is dedicated to providing information, monitoring, and reducing or eliminating the problems associated with anticoagulants. Careful monitoring by our specialized professionals can:

- Help avoid problems and dosing errors.
- Identify prescription and non-prescription drugs or supplements that may conflict with DOAC's.
- Reduce adverse effects.
- Educate and answer patients questions regarding their medication.

We offer face-to-face visits by scheduled appointments and supply take home print-outs to summarize each visit. When you visit the clinic, our pharmacists will monitor your laboratory values, provide you with current information, and report back to your physician the same day.

*McLaren Bay Region's
Anticoagulation Clinic accepts
patients by physician referral only.*

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