

## Non-vitamin K antagonist oral anticoagulants (NOACs)

### What are anticoagulants?

You have been prescribed an anticoagulant belonging to the group of medicines known as non-vitamin K antagonist oral anticoagulants (NOACs). An anticoagulant medicine increases the time that your blood takes to clot and so helps prevent harmful clots from forming in blood vessels. There are several types of anticoagulants available and this leaflet explains some important information you need to know about your medicine.

You have been prescribed (tick as appropriate)

<b>Apixaban</b>		<b>Dabigatran</b>		<b>Edoxaban</b>		<b>Rivaroxaban</b>	
-----------------	--	-------------------	--	-----------------	--	--------------------	--

### How do I take my anticoagulant?

- You should take your medication once or twice a day depending on which medication you have been prescribed. Check the label on the box of medication.
- Apixaban, dabigatran and edoxaban can be taken with or without food. Rivaroxaban should be taken with a meal. The medication should be swallowed whole with water. Do not bite or chew the tablets.
- If you accidentally take more tablets than you have been told to take, let your GP know immediately.
- You should take your medicine at the same time each day.
- If you miss a dose, see the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine or speak to your Pharmacist for advice on what to do. Do not take a double dose to catch up.
- Contact your GP a week before you are due to run out of medication so that you can be given another prescription.
- Store the medicine at room temperature, out of reach of children, and do not use after the expiry date on the packet.
- You should continue to take the medicine until your GP or hospital doctor advises you to stop.

### Are there any side effects?

The most serious side effects of anticoagulant therapy are bleeding and bruising. If you cut yourself, apply a firm pressure to the site for at least five minutes using a clean, dry dressing. If you experience any of the following consult your GP:

Excessive bleeding	Nose bleeds	Bloodshot eye(s)
Loose or liquid stools	Blood in urine (pink or brown in colour)	Blood in stool (red or black in colour)
Stomach ache	Indigestion	Feeling sick
Unexplained dizziness or weakness	Swelling or discomfort	Sudden severe headache
Unusual or spontaneous bruising.		

**If you experience any of the following go to A&E immediately:**

- You vomit blood
- You are unable to stop bleeding after injury or if you fall, especially if you hit your head.

### **What can affect the anticoagulants?**

Make sure that your doctor knows about any other medicines you take (including herbal medicines).

You should not take this medicine if you have a condition that puts you at significant risk of major bleeding.

### **Who must I tell that I take anticoagulant therapy?**

#### **Doctors and dentists before medical and dental procedures**

Make sure that you tell your doctor or dentist well in advance of any planned procedure (including operations in hospital, minor procedures at the doctor's surgery and any dental procedures). Your anticoagulant treatment will be considered during the planning of your operation/procedure. Do not stop taking your anticoagulant unless told to do so by your doctor.

Tell any doctor or healthcare professional prescribing you medicines, that you are taking an anticoagulant medicine and they and they will be able to advise you which medicines are safe.

Tell your dentist or any health worker involved in your care. **You should carry an alert card with you at all times.** If you lose your card please contact the GP for a new card.

### **Other considerations**

Women taking anticoagulants should not become pregnant and should be using effective contraception if of child bearing age.

Do not breast feed while taking anticoagulants.

Women may experience heavier periods while taking anticoagulants.

### **Follow-up**

You should attend your GP practice every three to 12 months (to be agreed with your GP depending on your individual circumstances), to discuss continuing this medicine and have any required tests carried out. If this is the first time you have been prescribed this medicine, your local community pharmacy can provide you with information and support through the New Medicine Service. For more information on this service visit:

<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/pharmacists/Pages/medicine-service-qa.aspx>

For further information, refer to the patient information leaflet by the AF association at [http://www.heartrhythmalliance.org/files/files/afa/For%20Patients/A%20Guide%20for%20Patients%20Prescribed%20Oral%20Anticoagulant%20Therapy%20A5\(1\).pdf](http://www.heartrhythmalliance.org/files/files/afa/For%20Patients/A%20Guide%20for%20Patients%20Prescribed%20Oral%20Anticoagulant%20Therapy%20A5(1).pdf)