

Direct-Acting Oral Anticoagulant (DOAC) Information Sheet

Understanding Direct-Acting Oral Anticoagulants (DOACs)

DOACs are a type of “blood-thinning” medication used to reduce the risk of forming blood clots in conditions such as Atrial Fibrillation (AF) and in individuals who have undergone major surgery. In patients with Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) or Pulmonary Embolism (PE), it may be used to prevent existing blood clots from extending or recurring.

It is therefore important to take your DOAC as directed by your healthcare provider. Missing doses or changing the timing of your medicine might make it less effective and increase the risk of blood clots and/or stroke.

Below are two different DOACs that may be prescribed:

Apixaban
(Eliquis ®)

Rivaroxaban
(Xarelto ®)

How do I take my DOAC?

Follow the dosage that is prescribed by your healthcare provider. It is recommended to take your DOAC around the same time each day after food.



If you are unable to swallow tablets whole, Apixaban and Rivaroxaban may be crushed and mixed with water or soft foods (e.g. porridge) and taken orally.

What should I do if I missed a dose?

Medication	Actions
<input type="checkbox"/> Apixaban	Take the dose immediately and then continue with your usual twice daily intake as before. Do not double your dose.
<input type="checkbox"/> Rivaroxaban	<p>Once-daily dosing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take the missed dose as soon as possible on the same day. Continue your usual dosing regimen the following day.• If you remember the missed dose only on the next day, omit the missed dose and take your medicine as per usual. Do not double your dose. <p>Twice-daily dosing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take the missed dose as soon as possible on the same day. If it is almost time for your second dose of the day, two tablets may be taken at once. Continue with your usual twice daily intake the next day.• If you remember the missed dose only on the next day, omit the missed dose and take your medicine as per usual. Do not double your dose.

How should my DOAC tablets be stored?

Store the tablets in a dry place at room temperature, away from heat and direct light.



Other medicines or vitamin supplements, including over the counter (OTC) medications, herbal preparations or traditional medicines, can affect the action of DOACs. Please check with your pharmacist or doctor if you wish to take other medication and/or supplements.



What are some side effects of DOACs?

DOACs may increase the risks of bleeding and bruising. Some common signs of bleeding and how they can be managed are listed below.

	How to self-manage	Seek medical attention if
Unexplained bruising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examine yourself daily for any bruises and pin-sized blood spots under the skin.• Do not massage any bruises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extensive bruising, especially in the absence of trauma.• Size of bruise is increasing
Bleeding from cuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rinse the area with water and apply pressure for 15 minutes with a clean cloth.• Put on a sterile dressing or bandage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It involves a large or deep wound or cut.• Bleeding does not stop after applying continuous pressure for more than 15 minutes.• Bright red blood spurting out.

	How to self-manage	Seek medical attention if
Bleeding from gums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a soft-bristle toothbrush and brush your teeth gently. • Apply gentle pressure to the bleeding area with a gauze for 15 minutes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bleeding does not stop after applying continuous pressure for more than 15 minutes. • Prolonged or recurrent bleeding.

Go to the Emergency Department immediately if you experience or notice the following:

Signs or Symptoms	Remarks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee-grain like appearance of vomit • Coughing out blood • Red or dark brown urine • Bloody, dark, tarry and odorous stools • Hard fall or impact occurring to any part of your body • Sudden blurred vision or severe headache • Excessive menstrual bleeding 	<p>These may suggest severe bleeding, which needs immediate medical attention.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbness and/or weakness over one side of your body • Sudden blurred vision or severe headache • Sudden shortness of breath • Increasing frequency of chest tightness or chest pains • Sudden development of red, swollen, warm and painful lower limb(s) 	<p>These may suggest a blood clot or stroke, which needs immediate medical attention.</p>

What other precautions should I take?

Certain contact sports and activities like rugby and karate should be avoided as they can put you at greater risk of injuries and bruising. If you will be undergoing any sort of invasive procedures, such as a surgery or dental procedure, check with your doctor to see if there is a need to stop taking your DOAC before the procedure.

Contributed by Pharmacy, Allied Health Services

This brochure is produced for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek the advice of a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health or medical condition.

Information shared is accurate as of April 2024 and subject to revision without prior notice.



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