

- **Will apixaban interact with other medicines, food or alcohol?**

Apixaban has fewer potential interactions with other medicines compared with warfarin, and at present there are no known interactions with specific foods or alcohol. There are some medicines that apixaban does interact with so patients should inform their prescriber of the names of all medicines they are taking (including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and herbal supplements).

- **Should patients stop taking apixaban if they are going to have a dental or medical procedure?**

Patients should not stop taking apixaban without first talking to their doctor or dentist. Apixaban may need to be stopped for one or two days before any planned surgery, dental or medical procedure.

All patients should be given the apixaban alert card and counselled on the details. This should be carried with them at all times.

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PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

APIXABAN FOR THE TREATMENT OF NON-VALVULAR ATRIAL FIBRILLATION

People with atrial fibrillation (AF) are at increased risk of having a stroke. If you have AF, your doctor should assess your individual risk of a stroke, and discuss with you as to whether you should be started on medication to reduce this risk. This leaflet has been devised to provide information in conjunction with the advice from your doctor.

- **What is apixaban for?**

Apixaban (Eliquis®) is an anticoagulant (like warfarin) used to lower the risk of blood clots developing in patients who have a condition called atrial fibrillation (an abnormal heart beat) as well as other risk factors for stroke. A blood clot which blocks an artery (blood vessel) is called an embolism. If the embolism occurs in the arteries of the brain it can cause a stroke. Anticoagulants slow down the time it takes for your blood to clot and reduce the risk of these events happening.

- **For patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation, is it worth changing from warfarin?**

Warfarin has been prescribed for more than 60 years so there is plenty of experience of its clinical use. The clinical trial showed that apixaban is as effective as warfarin. For patients whose warfarin is well controlled, it is probably not advisable to change. For patients who have poor anticoagulant control, a switch to apixaban might be considered.

- **Does apixaban cause less bleeding than warfarin?**

As both apixaban and warfarin affect blood clotting, patients may still experience side effects such as bruising and bleeding. Intracranial bleeding (bleeding into the brain) is worrying because it is usually very serious. In a recent clinical trial, apixaban caused less intracranial bleeding than warfarin.

Gastrointestinal (stomach and bowel) bleeding is a concern with oral anticoagulants, however, apixaban did not show an increase in gastrointestinal bleeding when compared to warfarin during a recent study.

- **If a patient has excessive bleeding, can the anticoagulant effect of apixaban be reversed?**

There is no product currently available to reverse bleeding with apixaban. However, if urgent treatment is required, apixaban will be discontinued and supportive measures will be started. It is easier to manage excessive bleeding with warfarin as there are other medicines that counteract its effects.

- **Are regular blood tests needed to monitor apixaban levels?**

There is no need for regular blood tests to measure the level of anticoagulant control with apixaban.

- **When and how do I take this medicine?**

Always take this medicine as your doctor has told you. If you do not take apixaban regularly it will not be effective and your risk of a clot forming will increase.

The dose is usually 5mg twice daily morning and night. This dose should be reduced to 2.5mg twice daily if you have at least two of the following criteria; 80 years or older, weigh 60kg or less or if you have poor renal function (your doctor will check your renal function before starting).

Apixaban should be swallowed with water and can be taken with or without food.

- **What are the possible side effects of this medicine?**

As this medicine affects blood clotting, most side effects are related to signs such as bruising or bleeding. Tell your doctor immediately if you experience any of the following side effects: Long or excessive bleeding, exceptional weakness, tiredness, paleness, dizziness, headache or unexplained swelling. Also report if there is any blood in the urine or passing black tarry or blood stained stools.

Patients should seek urgent medical attention if they fall or injure themselves during treatment, especially if they hit their head, due to the increased risk of bleeding.

- **What should I do if I forget to take a dose?**

It is important not to skip doses. If a dose is missed, the patient should take apixaban immediately and then continue with twice daily intake as before.

- **What should I do if I take too many tablets?**

If you have taken too many tablets all at once, you may have an increased risk of bleeding. Contact your doctor or local hospital casualty department at once. Show the doctor your pack of tablets.

- **How do I store apixaban?**

Do not take your apixaban if the expiry date has passed. Store them in a dry place below 25°C. Apixaban may be put into a dosette box. Keep all medicines well out of the reach of children – it is best to lock them in a cupboard or medicine cabinet.