

# Apixaban (Eliquis®)

Patient information leaflet.

## WHAT ABOUT TAKING OTHER MEDICINES?

Your medicines will be reviewed before you start apixaban and any necessary changes will be made, as other medicines may interact with apixaban. It is important you check with your pharmacist or doctor before starting any additional medicines or herbal remedies or before stopping any existing ones.

- Avoid aspirin and aspirin containing medicines unless prescribed by your doctor who knows you are taking apixaban
- Avoid non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen (Nurofen®) which is available over the counter
- Paracetamol and codeine-based pain killers are acceptable.
- It is advisable to purchase all medicines from one pharmacy and inform them you are taking apixaban

## WHAT ABOUT PREGNANCY OR BREASTFEEDING?

Apixaban is not recommended during pregnancy or breastfeeding.

- If you are planning to become pregnant please inform your doctor who may switch you to an alternative drug.
- Women of childbearing age should use a reliable contraceptive while taking the anticoagulant.
- If you are on apixaban and your period is 1 week overdue and you think you may be pregnant, do a pregnancy test. If the pregnancy test is positive, you should contact your doctor urgently. If the test is negative, re-test every 3 days until either the period arrives or the test is positive.
- Breastfeeding is not recommended while taking apixaban. Alternative anticoagulants can be used when you are breastfeeding.

## CAN I PLAY CONTACT SPORTS?

If you are involved in contact sport, discuss this with your doctor or DOAC clinic.

## CAN I DRINK ALCOHOL?

It is recommended that you do not exceed the recommended upper limit of 2 standard drinks per day.

1 standard drink

= 1 glass or half pint of beer, lager or stout

= 1 small glass of wine (100 mL)

= 1 single measure of spirits, e.g. whiskey or vodka or gin.

## WHAT ABOUT TRAVEL?

Ensure you have enough apixaban with you for your trip and carry it in your hand luggage.

## DO NOT STOP TAKING THIS MEDICATION WITHOUT FIRST TALKING TO YOUR DOCTOR

Carry your anticoagulant alert card with you and wear an alert bracelet. Show your alert card to your Doctor, pharmacist, dentist or nurse at each visit.

Visit [www.hpra.ie](http://www.hpra.ie) and search 'apixaban' to get further information on this drug.

### Postal address:

National Coagulation Centre,  
St James's Hospital,  
James Street,  
Dublin 8  
D08 A978

### Email Address

[ncc@stjames.ie](mailto:ncc@stjames.ie)

**If your DOAC is managed by your GP – PLEASE CONTACT YOUR GP FOR ALL QUERIES.**

### ONLY NCC patients

**For Urgent Care** please contact your nearest emergency department without delay.

### **Non-Urgent Clinical Queries**

Monday-Friday 08:00-17:00

Please call the nurse on (01) 428 4403 and leave your name, hospital number or date of birth, contact details and your query and a nurse will return your call)

**For Non-Clinical Queries** appointments, documentation requests

**Monday- Friday 08:30-17:00** Please call (01) 416 2637 Email: [ncc@stjames.ie](mailto:ncc@stjames.ie)

To change an appointment please email [anticoagappointments@stjames.ie](mailto:anticoagappointments@stjames.ie)

Scan the QR code to access the  
**DOAC Patient Information Video**

Access at: [www.bit.ly/doacncc](http://www.bit.ly/doacncc)



The information provided in this leaflet is not exhaustive, please refer to the patient information provided with apixaban for full detailed information and/or discuss with your doctor/pharmacist.

## WHAT IS APIXABAN?

Apixaban is one of a group of anticoagulants called Direct Oral Anti-Coagulants (DOACs). Apixaban works by blocking a substance in the body called Factor Xa which is involved in the blood clotting process.

Apixaban has been licenced in adults for:

- Prevention of blood clots in patients who have knee or hip replacement surgery
- Treatment and prevention of blood clots in your legs, i.e. a Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) or in your lungs, i.e. Pulmonary Embolus(PE)
- Prevention of stroke in patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation (irregular heartbeat).

**If you are being switched from warfarin to apixaban then warfarin must be discontinued, both agents should not be taken at the same time**

## WHAT DOSE OF APIXABAN SHOULD I TAKE?

The dose varies from patient to patient and depends on why you require the anticoagulant. Your prescribing doctor/pharmacist will explain your dose in detail.

## HOW LONG WILL I NEED TO TAKE APIXABAN FOR?

The length of treatment depends on the condition requiring the treatment. Your doctor will discuss this with you when you start your treatment. Some people need treatment for a short time, e.g. three months, while others will need to continue apixaban indefinitely.

## WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF APIXABAN?

Like all medicines, apixaban can cause side effects, although not everybody will get them. Like other similar medicines (medicines to reduce blood clotting), apixaban may cause bleeding which can potentially be life-threatening. In some cases the bleeding may not be obvious.

**Please attend the Emergency Department immediately if you suffer major trauma or a blow to the head or unable to stop bleeding and inform the healthcare professional that you are taking apixaban.**

**Consult your doctor immediately if you have:**

- Bloody, black or tarry bowel motions
- Blood in the urine
- Coughing up or vomiting blood or material that looks like coffee grounds
- Nose bleeds (that last longer than 10 minutes)

**Please inform your doctor if you have:**

- Heavy menstrual bleeding
- Nosebleeds (that last less than 10 minutes)
- Bleeding from your gums
- Unusual or extensive bruising
- Exceptional weakness
- Tiredness
- Paleness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Unexplained swelling

## HOW AND WHEN SHOULD I TAKE MY APIXABAN?

**We recommend you take your apixaban with a full glass of water.** The tablet should be swallowed whole. If you have difficulty in swallowing apixaban, it can be crushed and mixed with 2 tablespoonful's (30 mL) of water, apple juice or apple puree immediately before taking. Ensure you take the full contents. Apixaban may be taken with or without food.

As apixaban is short acting please make sure you take it every 12 hours, for example, 8 am and 8 pm.

**Please inform the healthcare professional treating you that you are taking apixaban, this includes anyone who prescribes medication for you or anyone who plans to carry out a procedure or surgery on you, for example, your dentist or surgeon, and inform them well in advance of the date of procedure.**

## DOES APIXABAN NEED TO BE MONITORED?

Apixaban levels do not require routine monitoring. However, we recommend that your kidney and liver function is checked prior to starting treatment and at least once a year. If you develop abnormal kidney function your dose may need to be reduced. Discuss with prescriber, GP or DOAC clinic.

## WHAT IF I FORGET A DOSE?

If a dose is missed, take the dose immediately if it's still more than 6 hours until your next scheduled dose. If it's less than 6 hours until your next dose, skip the dose you missed and take the next scheduled dose as normal. Then continue with twice daily intake.

**If you have missed a dose or took too much of your apixaban and you are unsure of what to do, contact the DOAC clinic or your pharmacist for advice.**