

### What is Apixaban?

Apixaban is one of a group of anticoagulants called DOACS which may be used in the treatment of clots in your legs (DVT) or in your lungs (pulmonary embolus / PE) or to help prevent DVT or PE after knee or hip surgery or to help prevent formation of a clot in the heart of someone who has an irregular heart (Atrial fibrillation). Apixaban works by blocking a substance in the body which is involved in the blood clotting process.

### 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 and when should I take my Apixaban?

We recommend you take your apixaban with a full glass of water. It may be taken with or without food. As Apixaban is short acting please make sure you take it every 12 hours, for example 8am and 8pm.

If you have difficulty in swallowing, apixaban may be crushed and mixed with 2 tablespoons (30mls) of water, apple juice or apple puree immediately before taking.

### Are there any side effects associated with Apixaban?

The most serious side effect of Apixaban or any anticoagulant is bleeding or bruising. If you experience any of the following, please report to your GP/Emergency Department as soon as possible;

- ◆ Prolonged nose bleeds (lasting more than 10 minutes)
- ◆ Prolonged bleeding from cuts
- ◆ Bleeding gums
- ◆ Blood in bowel motion or black bowel motions

- ◆ Blood in vomit or sputum (spit)
- ◆ Passing blood (red or dark brown) in urine
- ◆ Significant spontaneous bleeding
- ◆ Unusual headaches
- ◆ For women:  
heavy or increased bleeding during your period or any other vaginal bleeding

If these symptoms persist or you develop any other side effect listed in the patient information leaflet supplied in the box with your Apixaban please contact your GP or clinic.

*Seek immediate attention if you suffer major trauma or a blow to the head or are unable to stop bleeding.*

### How long will I need to take Apixaban for?

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

### Does Apixaban need to be monitored?

Apixaban does not require routine blood test monitoring. However, we recommend that your kidney function is checked prior to starting treatment and at follow up appointments while on treatment. If you develop abnormal kidney function your dose may need to be reduced. Discuss with prescriber GP or clinic

### What if I forget a dose?

If it is more than 6 hours to the next dose, please take your missed dose and if it is less than 6 hours to your next dose, please miss out on the dose and take next dose at usual time.

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

### 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  
Avoid non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen (Nurofen) which is an available over the counter (OTC) medicine  
Paracetamol and codeine based pain killers are acceptable.

It is advisable to purchase all medicines from a pharmacy and inform them you are taking an Apixaban

*Please let other healthcare professionals treating you know that you are taking Apixaban. This includes anyone who prescribes you medication or carries out a procedure, for example, your dentist.*

### What if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

Apixaban is not recommended during pregnancy. Women who are taking Apixaban should discuss plans for future pregnancy with their doctor before they conceive. If there is a chance that you could become pregnant, use a reliable contraceptive while you are taking the anticoagulant

If 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 do contact sports?

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

### 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 (100mls)

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

### DOAC check list

#### You should:

- ◆ Report signs of bleeding or bruising
- ◆ Have annual blood tests to check your kidney function
- ◆ Take your **Apixaban** with a glass of water
- ◆ Take the dose prescribed
- ◆ Eat a normal healthy diet
- ◆ Carry your anticoagulant alert card with you
- ◆ Show your alert card to your pharmacist /dentist /nurse at each visit
- ◆ Attend all medical review appointments
- ◆ Always have a repeat prescription available.

#### You should not:

- ✗ Take aspirin or medicines containing aspirin unless prescribed by your doctor
- ✗ Miss a dose of Apixaban unless advised by your doctor
- ✗ Take an extra dose of apixaban
- ✗ Run out of tablets.

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

### Carrying a medical identification card.

It is always advisable to carry some sort of identification, so that in the event of you being unable to, it will let others know that you are taking an anticoagulant. The manufacturer of the drug provides an alert card in every pack of Apixaban. The manufacturer has also made available a smartphone app which can help remind you to take all your medications. There are also a variety of items available to buy that tell people that you are taking an anticoagulant including credit card size alert cards and medic alert bracelets and necklaces.

#### **Alert bands available from Thrombosis Ireland**

*This leaflet is for general information only and is not a substitute for medical advice.*



#### Patient Information Leaflet



Email: [info@thrombosisireland.ie](mailto:info@thrombosisireland.ie)

[www.thrombosisireland.ie](http://www.thrombosisireland.ie)

Phone: 087 363 4828

Mon. – Fri. 9am – 1pm

Contact: [info@thrombosisireland.ie](mailto:info@thrombosisireland.ie)