

Patient information

Rivaroxaban and Aspirin use for Peripheral Artery Disease

Vascular Department - Aintree

This patient information leaflet has been written to provide information to patients who have been prescribed rivaroxaban to take in addition to aspirin by their vascular surgeon. It also contains answers to frequently asked questions.

The combination of rivaroxaban (2.5mg twice daily) and aspirin (75mg once daily) is prescribed to prevent blood clots in your arteries either if you have coronary (heart) artery disease or peripheral (leg or arm) artery disease.

The recommendation to use this combination of medicines comes from a drug study called, 'The Compass Trial.' The study showed that the combination of aspirin and rivaroxaban works better than aspirin alone at preventing clots in the arteries, and hence reducing the chance of heart attacks and major amputations.

What is peripheral arterial disease?

Peripheral arterial disease is a common condition where a build-up of fatty deposits and thickening occurs in the arteries that restricts blood supply to leg muscles. It is also known as peripheral vascular disease and can cause pain on walking or less commonly in more severe cases pain or gangrene.

What is rivaroxaban?

Rivaroxaban is an anticoagulant ('blood thinner'), which is a type of medicine that slows down your body's ability to clot, therefore reducing the likelihood of dangerous blood clots forming in blood vessels.

How is rivaroxaban taken?

Rivaroxaban is taken by mouth (orally) and the dose for peripheral artery disease is one 2.5mg tablet twice a day. The tablet should be swallowed whole, preferably with water, and taken together with a meal.

Rivaroxaban is used by different patients for different reasons. Another person prescribed rivaroxaban may take a different dose than you. Always take rivaroxaban exactly as your doctor has told you and check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure of your correct dose.

What is aspirin?

Aspirin is an antiplatelet medication, it prevents blood cells sticking together and forming an artery blood clot.

How is aspirin taken?

Aspirin is taken by mouth (orally). The dose is one tablet (75mg) once daily.

Do I need regular blood tests?

Unlike some other anticoagulants you will not need frequent regular blood checks. You should have blood tests once or twice a year, organised by your GP, to check your blood count, liver and kidney function.

What are the common side effects of rivaroxaban and aspirin?

The most important unwanted effect is unexplained or prolonged bleeding. It is very important that if you have unexplained or prolonged bleeding that you seek medical advice.

If you experience any of the following you must seek urgent medical advice by attending the accident and emergency department (AED):

- ☐ Nose bleeds you can't stop
- ☐ Blood in your urine
- ☐ Fresh blood or black stools
- ☐ Brown coloured vomit or fresh blood in vomit.
- ☐ Any bleeding you **cannot** stop **requires** medical assistance.

If you knock yourself whilst taking rivaroxaban and aspirin you might find that you bruise more easily, this is normal, however large unexplained bruising is a sign of abnormal bleeding and requires medical assistance.

If you feel you are having any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at: <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>. By reporting side effects, you can help provide more information on the safety of these medicines.

For a full list of possible side effects please see the patient information leaflet provided with your medicine.

If you forget to take rivaroxaban or aspirin

Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed dose. If you miss a dose, take your next dose at the usual time.

Do I need to reduce my alcohol intake?

Excess alcohol can increase your risk of falling that can result in serious injuries (e.g. fractures and serious head injuries). Limit your daily alcohol intake to the current recommended NHS guidelines (14 units per week). For what this means see: <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/alcohol/Pages/alcohol-units.aspx> or ask your nurse or doctor.

Can I participate in contact or hazardous sports activities?

Seek advice about participating in contact or hazardous sports/activities. It may be possible to take part but your doctor or nurse may advise against the activity.

Do I have to carry a card?

Yes, you will be given an alert card that you must carry with you at all times. This explains that you are taking rivaroxaban and has important information to be given to medical professionals in an emergency.

Do I need to inform anyone that I am taking rivaroxaban and aspirin?

It is important to inform your GP/ surgeon, nurse/midwives, dentist, and any other healthcare provider. If your medicine is changed or you start a new drug, you must inform your GP; this includes over the counter medicines that you buy. Anyone changing your medicines must be informed that you are taking rivaroxaban and aspirin.

Can I get my rivaroxaban and aspirin from any pharmacy?

Yes, initially, you will be given a supply from the hospital pharmacy. Thereafter your GP will be able to continue prescribing for you directly for you to obtain your rivaroxaban and aspirin at your local pharmacy or chemist.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Do not take rivaroxaban if you are pregnant or breast-feeding. If there is a chance that you could become pregnant, use a reliable contraceptive while you are taking rivaroxaban. If you become pregnant while you are taking this medicine, tell your doctor immediately, who will decide how you should be treated.

Pregnant or breast feeding women should not take aspirin unless advised by their doctor.

There is a potential for heavier and longer periods whilst taking rivaroxaban and aspirin.

Taking oral contraceptive pill (OCP) or hormone replacement therapy (HRT)?

The OCP and HRT can be risk factors for developing a blood clot. Discuss the risks and benefits of the OCP or HRT with your GP or surgeon.

If I need surgery or an invasive procedure?

Inform your surgical team and/or GP that you are taking an aspirin and rivaroxaban; your rivaroxaban will need to be stopped at least 48 hours prior to surgery and can be recommenced once your team has assessed that your risk of bleeding has passed.

What if I am admitted to hospital?

If you are admitted to hospital your rivaroxaban will be suspended. This is because while you are a hospital in-patient you will be prescribed an injectable medicine to prevent blood clots which means you will not need to take your rivaroxaban. Your rivaroxaban can resume on discharge when the injections stop.

If you take more aspirin and rivaroxaban than you should:

Contact your GP immediately if you have taken too many as this increases the risk of bleeding. If out of hours contact 111 for advice.

If you stop taking rivaroxaban and aspirin

Take your medication on a regular basis and for as long as your doctor keeps prescribing it.

Do not stop taking your medication without talking to your doctor first. If you stop taking these medicines, it may increase your risk of having a clot or dying from a disease related to your blood vessels.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further Information

Who should I contact if I need more information?

You should contact:

Vascular Clinical Nurse Specialist

Jayne Snellgrove

Tel: 0151 529 4961/4962

Text phone number: 18001 0151 529 4961/4962

NHS 24 Hour Helpline: 111

Medicines information at Aintree University Hospital Pharmacy

Tel: 0151 529 3208

If you have any further questions on the use of this medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Your GP

Your community pharmacy

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