

Patient information

Rivaroxaban

Haematology Department



20mg tablets
Dark red

15mg tablets
Dark red



10mg tablets
Peach



2.5mg tablets
Pale yellow

How does it work?

Rivaroxaban is a type of medicine known as an anticoagulant - or blood thinner. It makes your blood flow through your veins more easily. This means your blood will be less likely to make a blood clot.

Why has my doctor given me rivaroxaban and what are the benefits?

I am taking rivaroxaban (Xarelto®) for:

- ☐ A blood clot in the lungs (known as Pulmonary Embolism or PE)
- ☐ A blood clot in a vein, often in the leg (known as Deep Vein Thrombosis or DVT)
- ☐ An irregular heartbeat (known as Atrial Fibrillation or AF)
- ☐ Coronary artery disease/peripheral vascular disease (please see separate section below)
- ☐ Other:

Rivaroxaban is used to prevent growth of a clot that has developed.

It's also used to lower the risk of blood clots if you're at high risk of having them in the future. People who are at high risk include those who have atrial fibrillation, a condition which is associated with clots in the brain (stroke).

Rivaroxaban is one of the anticoagulant treatment options available for preventing clots.

It is part of the direct oral anticoagulant group of medicines, also known as DOACs.

How should I take my rivaroxaban?

Rivaroxaban needs to be taken with a meal preferably with water or it won't be as effective.

If you have had a DVT or PE this will usually mean you have to take your rivaroxaban twice a day for 21 days (as a loading dose) then a lower dose once a day after that until the treatment course ends.

If you are taking the rivaroxaban because you have atrial fibrillation the dose is usually once a day.

I am taking rivaroxaban:

☐ Long-term or lifelong

☐ Short term – this is usually three to six months. Please discuss how long your treatment will last with your doctor.

My dose is:

What if I can't swallow my rivaroxaban?

If you can't swallow your rivaroxaban, ask your pharmacist or doctor for the liquid version. If you don't have the liquid, rivaroxaban tablets can be crushed and mixed with water or apple puree immediately before taking it.

Do not stop taking this medicine unless your doctor tells you to.

You should inform your doctor or dentist you are taking rivaroxaban before any surgery or treatment is scheduled.

It may need to be stopped for one or more days before any planned surgery, dental or medical procedure but do not stop taking until asked to, as an alternative anticoagulant treatment may need to be given instead.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

It is important not to skip doses or the medicine won't work.

If you are only taking the tablets once a day and have missed a dose then take it as soon as you remember and then continue on the following day with the once daily dosing. The dose should not be doubled within the same day to make up for a missed dose.

However if you are taking the 15mg tablets twice a day (the 21 day loading phase for PE or DVT) and have missed a dose then take it as soon as you remember.

You can take two 15mg tablets at the same time to get a total of two tablets (30mg) on one day. On the following day you should carry on taking one 15mg tablet twice a day.

If you have taken too many tablets all at once, you may have an increased risk of bleeding. Contact your doctor or local hospital Emergency Department (A&E) at once.

Show the doctor your pack of tablets. Always follow the instructions on the label. If you do not take rivaroxaban regularly it will not be effective and your risk of a clot forming will increase.

What are the side effects of rivaroxaban?

All medicines have side effects, but not everybody will experience these. 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 – any bleeding you CANNOT stop REQUIRES medical assistance. If you experience a nose bleed that lasts than more than 10 minutes, or a cut that lasts more than 30 minutes, please go to a walk-in centre.
- Blood in the urine or vomit.
- Passing black, tarry or blood stained stools.
- Exceptional weakness, tiredness or paleness.
- Dizziness or headaches.
- Unexplained swelling.

If you fall and injure yourself while taking rivaroxaban, you should seek urgent medical attention, especially if you hit your head or are involved in a road traffic accident, due to the increased risk of bleeding.

If you knock yourself whilst taking rivaroxaban 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.

What are the risks of rivaroxaban?

There are risks and benefits of taking all medicines, however, your doctor will discuss why there are more benefits than risks for you taking rivaroxaban.

How should rivaroxaban be stored?

Do not take your tablets if the expiry date has passed. Keep the tablets in their original packaging and store them in a dry place below 25°C. Keep all medicines out of the reach of children – it is best to lock them in a cupboard or medicine cabinet.

Rivaroxaban may be re-dispensed into a compliance aid, such as a dosette box, if necessary.

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 has important information to be given to medical professionals in an emergency.

Can I take other medicines/ alcohol while taking rivaroxaban?

Rivaroxaban has fewer potential interactions with other medicines compared with warfarin. Food helps the body absorb the rivaroxaban properly, which is why it should always be taken with food. There are currently no other known interactions between rivaroxaban and specific foods or alcohol.

There are some medicines which rivaroxaban does interact with so you should inform your prescribing doctor of the names of all medicines you are taking (including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and herbal supplements).

Rivaroxaban should not be taken with anti-inflammatories like ibuprofen or naproxen. Sometimes your doctor will wish you to take rivaroxaban with another medicine that may thin your blood such as low dose aspirin or clopidogrel. If you are taking one of these medicines please check with your doctor or anticoagulation service that it is to continue with the rivaroxaban.

It is important you check with your doctor or pharmacist before you take any other medicines, including ones you buy, especially cold or flu remedies.

Are there any alternative treatments available?

If you have been prescribed rivaroxaban it is the most appropriate treatment for you however there are other treatment options. If you have any side effects or wish to discuss alternative treatments please speak to your doctor.

How does rivaroxaban differ to warfarin?

Warfarin is another type of anticoagulant that patients may be prescribed as an alternative if deemed appropriate, for example if you have a metallic heart valve. Warfarin requires regular blood test monitoring and may require regular dose changes. If you want to find out more about warfarin, please contact the anticoagulation clinic (contact details below).

What will happen if I decide not to have treatment?

If you decide not to take rivaroxaban or any other anticoagulant you will not get any of the benefits. You must discuss this with your doctor as they need to know if you are not taking it and may be able to prescribe an alternative.

Rivaroxaban for coronary artery disease/peripheral vascular disease in combination with aspirin

The combination of rivaroxaban 2.5mg twice daily alongside aspirin 75mg daily has been shown to reduce the risks of major adverse limb and cardiovascular events compared to aspirin alone. Such events include limb ischaemia, amputations and stroke. This combination should be taken long-term unless a doctor tells you to stop. Currently there is no alternative anticoagulant for this indication.

Rivaroxaban 2.5mg twice daily is a lower dose than what is used to treat clots. The sections detailing side effects, alert card, and using other medication alongside rivaroxaban of this information booklet still applies to you so please take the time to read through this.

It is important to take this medication with food. If you miss a dose, please continue with the regular dose at the next scheduled time. Do not double the dose to make up for a missed dose.

Your GP will continue the prescribing and monitoring of this medication, and you do not require a referral to the anticoagulation clinic. However, if you do have any concerns with this medication you can still contact Haematology Liverpool (contact details below).

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

This leaflet is not a substitute for any advice your doctor, nurse or pharmacist may give you.

You can get more detailed information from the manufacturer's information leaflet.

If you want further information regarding the content of this leaflet please contact Roald Dahl Anticoagulation Clinic (contact details below).

Who can I tell about my side effects?

You should discuss any side effects with a healthcare professional.

In addition, please report any side effects to the MHRA via the Yellow Card Scheme. Reports are confidential and help to improve the safety of medicines.

Report side effects on the website (visit <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/> or search for Yellow Card Scheme and on the Yellow Card App on the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

If you have any questions about rivaroxaban please contact your pharmacist, doctor or nurse.

Disclaimer

This leaflet does not replace the patient information leaflet issued with your medicines, but you should read it in conjunction with them.

Medicines information patient Hotline
Ring 0151 529 3208

Haematology Liverpool
Royal Liverpool Hospital: Open 9am-5pm
Tel: 0151 706 3397

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