

Apixaban

When you have, or are at risk of having blood clots form in the deep veins of your body, called deep vein thrombosis, or DVT, or if you have a heart condition called atrial fibrillation, you may be prescribed Apixaban. You may also be familiar with its brand name, Eliquis. Apixaban is a high alert medication, which means if you do not take it exactly as prescribed it may cause illness or injury.

To understand how Apixaban works, let's look at how blood clots can affect your body. When you have atrial fibrillation, blood can pool in the chambers of your heart and blood clots can form leading to a high risk of stroke. When you have DVT, blood clots can form in the deep veins of your body; usually in your legs, and can cause serious health problems.

Sometimes a clot may break away and travel through your blood vessels. Called an 'embolus', this moving clot can travel to the brain, heart or lungs and cause severe complications including stroke, heart attack, difficulty breathing, even death.

Apixaban is an oral medication used to break up these clots and keep the blood thin. Your healthcare provider will decide how much Apixaban you need to take, but tablets come in 2.5 mg and 5 mg doses. Make sure you understand what dose you are supposed to take to avoid injury.

Apixaban is a powerful medication. Some people should not take it. Do not take Apixaban if you are allergic to any of its ingredients. Do not take Apixaban if you have active or uncontrolled bleeding, or kidney or liver problems. Do not take Apixaban if you have an artificial heart valve.

Before taking Apixaban tell your healthcare provider if you are pregnant or planning to get pregnant. Discuss any possible risks to your baby with your healthcare provider. Do not breastfeed while taking Apixaban.

Before taking Apixaban, tell your healthcare provider if you have a history of high blood pressure, anemia, stroke, stomach ulcers, kidney problems, liver problems or bleeding problems.

Let all of your healthcare providers know you are taking Apixaban, including your dentist. You may need to stop taking your medication a few days before your appointment.

Before taking Apixaban, give your healthcare provider a complete list of all other medications you use, including vitamins and herbal supplements like St. John's Wort.

Some over-the-counter medications you may take can increase your risk of bleeding. When taking Apixaban avoid Aspirin, Ibuprofen like Advil or Motrin, and Naproxen like Aleve. Do not take any other oral blood thinner medications like Warfarin while taking this medication. Talk to your healthcare provider about your medication

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options.

When taking Apixaban you may have regular tests to see how well it's working and to check for side effects. Keep all of your healthcare and lab appointments.

The most common side effect of Apixaban is bleeding. Be careful to avoid getting a cut or injury. You may notice minor bleeding from your nose or gums, heavier than normal menstrual bleeding, and bruises that form easily.

If you are coughing up or vomiting blood, have urine that looks red or rusty, have red, black, or tarry bowel movements; or have pain, swelling or discomfort in the stomach, abdomen or joints, call 911. These can be a sign of internal bleeding.

Other common side effects include nausea and upset stomach, constipation or diarrhea, dizziness and headache. If you do notice any of these side effects contact your healthcare provider about how to manage them.

If you require a spinal tap or spinal anesthesia called an epidural while taking Apixaban, you are at an increased risk of developing a very serious blood clot around your spine. This can cause paralysis.

If you have an allergic reaction like trouble breathing, hives, or swelling of your face or throat, call 911.

If you have sudden leg or foot pain, purple toes or fingers, sudden dizziness, weakness or headache, shortness of breath, fast heartbeat, pale skin, yellowing of the eyes or skin, or you stop urinating, call 911 and get help immediately. This is not the complete list of side effects. Make sure you discuss all possible side effects with your healthcare provider.

Take Apixaban exactly as prescribed. Do not change your dose. If you have trouble swallowing the tablet whole, crush the tablet and add it to a glass of water or juice, or a soft food like apple sauce.

Apixaban is usually taken twice a day with or without food. Take your medication at the same time each day to avoid missing a dose. Try setting an alert on your phone or watch so you don't forget. If you do miss a dose, take Apixaban as soon as possible. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip your missed dose and return to your normal medication schedule. Do not double dose. If you think you have taken too much Apixaban, call 911.

Do not stop taking your medication without talking to your healthcare provider. If you stop taking this medication, you can increase your risk of stroke and blood clots.

Store Apixaban at room temperature away from moisture and direct sunlight. Your bathroom medicine cabinet is

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not the best place because of moisture. Do not leave your medication where it can get too hot or too cold. Always store your medication out of sight and out of reach of children to prevent accidents.

When you are done taking Apixaban, contact your healthcare provider or pharmacist about the proper way to dispose of any unused medications. Do not flush this medication down the toilet.

Apixaban can reduce your risk of dangerous blood clots and stroke. But it's a powerful medication that should only be taken exactly as prescribed. If you have any questions about Apixaban, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for more information.