

Taking a DOAC Blood Thinner: Your Daily Safety Guide

Pharmacology · High-Alert Medications

Apixaban, rivaroxaban, dabigatran, and edoxaban are blood thinners. They help prevent clots and stroke. They also make bleeding harder to stop.

Take it on time

- Take it at the same times every day.
- Apixaban and dabigatran: twice a day, about 12 hours apart.
- Rivaroxaban 15 mg or 20 mg: take it with food. For an uneven heartbeat (AF), take it with your evening meal.
- Swallow dabigatran capsules whole. Keep them in the original bottle.
- Your medicine and times: _____.

If you miss a dose

- Take it when you remember that same day.
- **Never take a double dose.** Ask your pharmacist if you are not sure.
- **Never stop it on your own.** Stopping raises your stroke risk.

Keep your checkups

- You do not need regular INR blood tests.
- You need a kidney blood test at least once a year.

Prevent bleeding

- Use a soft toothbrush and an electric razor.
- Do not take ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), or aspirin unless your provider approves.

- Ask your pharmacist before any new medicine or herb.

Tell every provider

- Tell every provider and dentist. Carry a card or wear a medical alert ID.
- Before surgery or dental work, ask when to stop and restart.
- **Get emergency care after any head injury, even if you feel well.**

Call your provider today if you have

- New bruising, small nosebleeds, or bleeding gums
- Pink or red urine, or heavier periods: call promptly
- A missed dose, a new medicine, or a possible pregnancy

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- Bleeding that will not stop
- Vomiting blood, or black, sticky stool
- A head injury or a sudden, severe headache
- Loss of balance, vision change, face droop, arm weakness, or trouble speaking

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: ncllexpace.com/patient-education/blood-thinners-doac-safety/patient

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