

# PHARMACY

## Drug Information

### Direct Acting Oral Anticoagulants (DOACs)

Apixaban, Dabigatran, Rivaroxaban



#### What are Direct Acting Oral Anticoagulants (DOACs)?

- DOACs are blood thinning medications that prevent harmful blood clots from forming in heart and blood vessels and lodging in brain, lungs or legs.
- They do not dissolve existing clots, but prevent clots from becoming larger.
- They are prescribed to patients:
  - With existing clot in the brain (stroke), legs (deep vein thrombosis) or lungs (pulmonary embolism)
  - With irregular heartbeat
  - Undergoing hip or knee replacement operation
- The duration of treatment varies from several weeks to long term.
- They do not require routine monitoring of blood thinning (anticoagulation) effects.
- Medications in this medicine class include Apixaban, Dabigatran and Rivaroxaban.

#### How are DOACs Taken?

Apixaban	Take with or without food. <u>If you miss a dose:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a dose immediately.</li> <li>• If there are less than six hours left to the next due dose, omit the missed dose.</li> <li>• Do not take more than one dose at a time to make up for the missed dose.</li> </ul>
Dabigatran	Take with or without food. Swallow whole; do not chew, crush or open capsule. <u>If you miss a dose:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a dose immediately.</li> <li>• If there are less than six hours left to the next due dose, omit the missed dose.</li> <li>• Do not take more than one dose at a time to make up for the missed dose.</li> </ul>

Rivaroxaban	<p>Take with or without food.</p> <p><u>If you miss a dose:</u></p> <p>For once daily dosing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a dose immediately.</li> <li>• Do not take more than one dose in a day to make up for the missed dose.</li> </ul> <p>For 15mg twice daily dosing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a dose immediately to ensure a total of 30mg is taken per day (in this case, two 15mg tablets may be taken together).</li> <li>• Resume therapy the next day as per usual.</li> </ul>
-------------	---

### Can DOACs be Taken with Other Medications?

- Some medications can affect the way DOACs work in your body.
- Inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, supplements, traditional, herbal or natural remedies. These include:
  - Prescription medications - other blood thinners, antibiotics, antifungals, anti-seizure medications.
  - Herbal remedies - St John's Wort.

### What are the Important Side Effects of DOACs?

Side Effects	Management
<p><b>Stomach discomfort</b></p> <p>Abdominal pain, nausea, gastric pain.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your medication after food.</li> <li>• Inform doctor or pharmacist if symptoms persist.</li> </ul>
<p><b>External (Obvious) bleeding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bleeding gums when brushing teeth</li> <li>• Unexplained nose bleed</li> <li>• Prolonged bleeding from an injury</li> <li>• Unexpected or unusual vaginal bleed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See a doctor if bleeding does not stop within minutes or if you feel unwell.</li> <li>• Use soft toothbrush and floss gently.</li> <li>• Use electric shaver instead of a blade.</li> <li>• For women, increased menstrual flow is common but check with your doctor if you feel unwell.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Internal bleeding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black, sticky, or bloody stools</li> <li>• Coughing up blood or coffee ground-like material</li> <li>• Unexplained bruises or purplish areas on skin</li> <li>• Blood in urine</li> <li>• Severe, continuous headache</li> <li>• Sudden giddiness or acute confusion</li> <li>• Sudden abdominal pain</li> <li>• Sudden backache or joint pain</li> <li>• Shortness of breath</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See a doctor immediately or</li> <li>• Admit yourself to Accident and Emergency department.</li> </ul>

Blood clots may still form while on DOAC therapy. The sign and symptoms depend on the site where it is found.

Site of Blood Clot and Signs and Symptoms	Management
<b>Leg or deep vein thrombosis</b> Swelling, redness, pain, warmth, numbness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See a doctor immediately or</li> <li>• Admit yourself to Accident and Emergency department.</li> </ul>
<b>Lung or pulmonary embolism</b> Chest pain, breathlessness, coughing up blood.	
<b>Brain or stroke</b> Muscle weakness, slurred speech, blackouts, giddiness, visual disturbances.	
<b>Heart or heart attack</b> Chest pain, shortness of breath, palpitations.	

If you develop rashes, facial swelling or shortness of breath after taking the medication, you could be allergic to the medication. Please seek medical attention immediately.

#### Are There any Special Precautions That I Need to Take?

- Avoid sports or activities that may cause injury.
- See a doctor if there is any fall, injury to your head or other parts of the body since serious internal bleeding may occur.
- Inform all doctors, dentists and pharmacists that you are on DOAC. There may be a need to withhold the therapy if you are undergoing a surgical procedure (e.g. endoscopy, dental treatment).
- Discuss with doctor or pharmacist if you intend to conceive or breastfeed.

#### How do I Store DOACs?

- Store the medicine in a cool, dry place away from heat, moisture and direct sunlight.
- For Dabigatran blister packs:
  - Store in the original packaging to protect from moisture.
  - If it is necessary to pack into a pillbox, cut the blister pack with the capsule still sealed within the blister pack.

If you have any problem with your treatment, please contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse clinician.

Keep all medications out of reach of children.

#### Disclaimer:

This information does not cover all possible uses, actions, precautions, side effects or interactions of Direct Acting Oral Anticoagulants (DOACs). It should not replace the advice and guidance given by your doctor or pharmacist. If you have questions about this or other medications, ask your doctor or pharmacist. TTSH does not endorse any brand name or generic medication listed in this pamphlet.



© Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Singapore 2018. All rights reserved. All information correct as of June 2018. No part of this document may be reproduced, copied, reverse compiled, adapted, distributed, commercially exploited, displayed or stored in a database, retrieval system or transmitted in any form without prior permission of Tan Tock Seng Hospital. All information and material found in this document are for purposes of information only and are not meant to substitute any advice provided by your own physician or other medical professionals.