Outpatient Anticoagulation Service

Oral anticoagulant therapy with Dabigatran, Rivaroxaban, Apixaban or Edoxaban

Patient name: ...........................................................................................................................................

Patient hospital number: ..........................................................................................................................

At discharge:

☐ Patients newly started on anticoagulant therapy (newly started during current admission) must attend the Addenbrooke’s Anticoagulant Clinic (Clinic 33 ATC) at the date and time indicated below:

- Date of appointment .............................................................................................................................
- Time of appointment .............................................................................................................................

☐ Patients on ODI / NOAC prior to admission - no appointment required

What are anticoagulants and why do I need to take them?
An anticoagulant medicine increases the time that your blood takes to clot. These drugs are designed to prevent harmful blood clots from forming in blood vessels. You have been prescribed a type of oral anticoagulant known as an Oral Direct Inhibitor (ODI) or Direct Oral Anticoagulant (DOAC) such as Dabigatran, Rivaroxaban, Apixaban or Edoxaban.

How long do I take the anticoagulant for?
This depends upon the exact medical reason/problem that you experienced. You will be given clear advice on how long to take the medication for.

How do I take my anticoagulant?
You should take your medication according to the label on your medicine. Take your medication at about the same time every day.

The medication should be taken with/after food and should be ideally be swallowed whole with water.
If you have been prescribed dabigatran or edoxaban, do not bite/chew/crush the capsules/tablets. If you have trouble swallowing, you can crush Rivaroxaban or Apixaban.

**What do I do if I forget to take my anticoagulant?**
Please read the section that applies to the anticoagulant that you are taking.

**Rivaroxaban** (Xarelto)
- **If you take Rivaroxaban 15mg twice a day** and a dose is missed, take the next dose as soon as you remember. You may take two doses at the same time to make up for the missed dose. Take your next dose the following day at the usual time.

- **If you take Rivaroxaban once a day** and a dose is missed, take the next dose as soon as you remember. Do **NOT** take more than one dose in a single day. Take your next dose the following day at the usual time.

**Dabigatran** (Pradaxa)
- If you miss a dose and it is more than six hours until your next dose then take the dose as soon as you remember and the next dose at the usual time. If it is less than 6 hours until the next dose then omit the missed dose and take the next dose at the usual time.

- Do not take a double dose to make up for as missed dose.

**Apixaban** (Eliquis)
- If you miss a dose you should take it as soon as you remember on that day, and then take the next dose at the usual time. Then continue as normal.

**Edoxaban** (Lixiana)
- You should take the tablet immediately and then continue the following day with the once daily tablet as usual. Do not take a double dose on the same day to make up for a forgotten dose.

**Are there any side effects?**
The most common side-effects are indigestion and/or minor bruising; you may also experience minor bleeding.

**Indigestion/nausea**: try taking your medication after food. If symptoms persist consult your GP.

**Diarrhoea/loose stools**: Consult your GP.

**Minor bruising/ minor bleeding**: Consult your GP or NHS 111
Serious side-effects
The most serious side effects of anticoagulant therapy are **bleeding or bruising**.

If you cut yourself, apply firm pressure to the site for at least five minutes using a clean, dry dressing.

**You should seek medical advice immediately by attending your A&E (Emergency Department), if you experience any of the following symptoms:**

- vomiting or coughing up blood
- if you suffer a major injury or are unable to stop bleeding.
- if you have a fall or injure yourself while on this treatment especially if you hit your head
- prolonged nose bleeds (more than 10 minutes)
- pass blood in your urine (pink or brown in colour)
- passing blood in your stool (red or black in colour)
- unexplained dizziness or weakness
- sudden severe headache
- unusual, severe or spontaneous bruising
- for women, heavy or increased bleeding during your period or any other vaginal bleeding.

**What can affect the control of my anticoagulation?**

- Make sure your GP knows if you are taking any other medicines. Very few drugs interact with your anticoagulant, but you should always inform your doctor if you are given a prescription for another drug.
- You should not take aspirin or clopidogrel unless it has specifically been prescribed by your doctor. It is also advisable to avoid non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like diclofenac or ibuprofen.
- If you purchase any over the counter medication or herbal remedies consult your pharmacist first to ensure these are safe to take with your anticoagulant.
- You must not take this medication if you have a condition which puts you at significant risk of major bleeding.
- How well your anticoagulant works is not affected by food or alcohol, although you should try to eat a healthy diet and if you drink alcohol to drink within sensible limits

**Who must I tell that I take anticoagulant therapy?**

- Tell any doctor or health care professional prescribing you medicine that you currently take anticoagulant therapy. They will advise you which medicines are safe to take with your anticoagulant.
- Tell your pharmacist if you are planning to buy any over the counter or herbal medicines.
- Tell your dentist, or any health worker involved in your medical care.
- You should carry your alert card with you at all times. If you lose your card please contact the Outpatient Anticoagulation Service for a replacement card.
Other questions?

- We recommend that women do not become pregnant while taking anticoagulant therapy. Please consult your Family Planning clinic or GP regarding contraception.
- If you think you may be pregnant contact your GP immediately for advice as these medicines should not be taken during pregnancy.
- You should not breast feed whilst taking these medicines.
- Women may experience heavier periods while you are taking anticoagulant therapy.
- If you need further supplies of your medication in most cases this is from your GP unless you have been advised otherwise.

Follow up

Regular blood tests to monitor how well the anticoagulant is working are not routinely required with ODIs/DOACS. You should meet with your GP annually to discuss continuing with this medication and how your health has been over the previous year or at any time before then if you are unwell.

For further advice please contact:
Addenbrooke’s Anticoagulation Service
Box 217, Addenbrooke’s Hospital
Hills Road
Cambridge
CB2 0QQ
Tel 01223 217127
Open: Monday to Thursday 09:00 to 17:00 hours.

We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.
For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:

If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.

Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

Document history
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