

## Medication Information

# Dabigatran

(Da – big – a – tran)

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### Other names for this medication are:

Pradaxa<sup>®</sup>

### What does this medication do?

This medication **is a blood thinner**, also called an anticoagulant.

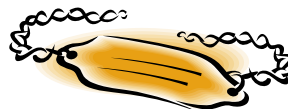
It prevents a blood clot from forming in blood vessels.

It may be used for:

- people who have had recent surgery on a knee or hip.
  - people who have a condition called atrial fibrillation.  
Atrial fibrillation is an irregular heart beat that is often very fast.
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## How do I take this medication?

- This medication is taken 1 or 2 times a day. Take it exactly as ordered by your health care provider.
- Take this medication at the same time each day.
- Take this medication with food if it upsets your stomach.
- Swallow whole. Do not crush, chew or open the capsule. This changes how much medication is absorbed by your stomach.
- Dabigatran capsules are sensitive to moisture. Do not take the capsule out of the foil packaging until just before swallowing it.
- Do not take this medication within 2 hours of taking antacids.
- Always check with your health care provider before taking any new medication, vitamins, topical products or herbal or natural products.
- Do not stop taking this medication without first checking with your health care provider.
- Carry medical alert identification to show that you take this medication and the medical reason why you take it.
- You may want to use a pill organizer, called a dosette, for your pills. This helps you remember to take your pills.



You will need a dosette with a large pocket to fit the foil packaging. You may find using a separate dosette for dabigatran works best.

Grapefruit can affect the way this medication works. If you eat grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice, limit the amount you have. You may eat 1 grapefruit or drink 125 ml (4 ounces) 1 to 2 times a week.

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## Who should know that I take this medication?

In order to avoid bleeding problems you need to tell all the members of your health care team that you take this medication.

This includes doctors, dentists, dental surgeons, pharmacists, nurses, chiropractors, massage therapists, physiotherapists, exercise leaders and podiatrists, as well as anyone else you consult.

## What should I do if I miss a dose?

### For people who take this medication 1 time a day:

- if you miss a dose by **less than 12 hours**
  - take a dose right away
  - then take your next dose at your regular dosing time
- if you miss a dose by **more than 12 hours**
  - skip the missed dose
  - take your next dose at your regular dosing time

### For people who take this medication 2 times a day:

- if you miss a dose by **less than 6 hours**
  - take a dose right away
  - then take your next dose at your regular dosing time
- if you miss a dose by **more than 6 hours**
  - take a dose right away
  - skip the next dose, then take your next dose at your regular dosing time

**If you are not sure about what to do, contact your health care provider.**

## What do I do when I am having surgery?

Call the health care provider that orders your dabigatran and report that you are having surgery or dental procedures. Your health care provider will arrange your anticoagulant care.

**Never** stop your dabigatran unless told to do so by the health care provider that orders your dabigatran.

If a referral has been made, the Thrombosis Team at the hospital will manage your anticoagulant therapy leading up to your hospital stay, and while you are in the hospital.

The Thrombosis Team will decide if you need to stop your dabigatran. It is usually stopped 1 to 4 days before surgery to prevent bleeding during surgery. Some procedures, such as minor dental or cataract surgery can be done while you are taking dabigatran.

## What else should I be aware of while taking this medication?

- Avoid activities that may cause bruising or bleeding such as contact sports.
- Avoid activities where you are at risk for head trauma such as rugby.
- Avoid using a razor with a blade. Use an electric razor.

### **If you have a cut, scrape or are bleeding**

- Apply pressure to the area for a full 5 minutes. If the bleeding continues, apply pressure to the area for another 5 minutes. Repeat this process for a total of 60 minutes.
  - If the bleeding will not stop after 60 minutes, go to an Emergency Department for treatment.
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**If you have a nosebleed**

- Sit down and lean slightly forward. Use your thumb and index finger to squeeze together the soft area of your nose. Keep holding your nose until the bleeding stops. Do this for at least 5 minutes. If it is still bleeding, hold your bleeding nose for another 10 minutes without letting go. Do not peek!
- Avoid touching the nostril or blowing your nose for the next 2 days.
- If you have a nosebleed that you cannot stop, go to the Emergency Department for help.

**Ways to prevent a nosebleed**

- Keep your nostrils moist to prevent a nosebleed. You may need to apply a product inside your nostrils to keep them moist. These include a petroleum jelly such as Vaseline<sup>®</sup>, Secaris gel<sup>™</sup> or Rhinaris gel<sup>™</sup>.
- Use a humidifier in your house, especially in the winter months when the air is dry.

**Brushing your teeth**

- Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush.
- Floss gently with satin or waxed dental floss daily.

**Menstrual bleeding change**

- Menstrual bleeding may be slightly heavier and last longer.
  - Talk to your health care provider if you are worried about any changes.
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### **Can I get pregnant while taking this medication?**

- Talk to your health care provider if you may be pregnant or are planning to get pregnant.
- This medication should be stopped as soon as you know you are pregnant.
- You may need blood thinner injections to replace dabigatran for the rest of your pregnancy.

### **Can I take this medication if I am breastfeeding?**

- You should not breastfeed your baby while taking this medication. Discuss with your health care provider before starting to breastfeed.

### **Can I travel while taking this medication?**

Yes, you can travel while taking this medication. It may take some planning. Here are some helpful hints for travel:

- Talk to your health care provider about your plans well in advance. You may need to take an extra supply of medication to have on hand.
  - Make sure you have proper health care coverage.
  - Keep your medication in the original pharmacy container.
  - Carry your medication with you at all times. Do not store your medication in a place that might get too hot, too cold or wet.
  - Carry an up-to-date list of all your medications with the amounts you take.
  - Carry a list of the names and telephone numbers of your health care providers.
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## **Can I drink alcohol while taking this medication?**

It is best not to drink a lot of alcohol while taking this medication. If you choose to drink alcohol, do not drink more than 2 standard drinks a day.

One standard drink means:

- 1.5 oz or 43 ml of liquor or spirits. This is 40% alcohol.
- 5 oz or 142 ml of wine. This is 12% alcohol.
- 12 oz or 341 ml of regular strength beer. This is 5% alcohol.
- Higher alcohol beer and coolers have more alcohol than one standard drink.

## **Contact your health care provider when you:**

- have surgery or dental work
- think you are pregnant
- have prolonged bleeding
- have bloody or black stools
- have bloody urine
- have nausea that persists
- have upset stomach that persists
- have any unwanted effects from the medication
- planning to become pregnant

**Go to the Emergency Department if you:**

- have any bleeding that will not stop
- are vomiting blood or coughing up contents that looking like coffee grounds
- have signs of a stroke such as numbness of your face, arms or legs, slurred speech or dizziness
- have chest pain that is unusual for you
- have fallen and injured your head
- have leg pain with swelling that is unusual for you
- have trouble breathing that is unusual for you



**Tell the staff right away that you take dabigatran.**

Contact your health care provider if you have any questions about your medication.