

## **Medication Information**

# **Rivaroxaban**

**(Ri – va – rox – xa - ban)**

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### **Other names for this medication:**

- Xarelto™

### **What does this medication do?**

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

It prevents a blood clot from forming in a blood vessel. The need to prevent a blood clot is important for 2 types of patients:

- People who have had recent surgery on a knee or hip.
- People who have a condition called atrial fibrillation also known as a fast heart rate.

This medication is also used to treat a blood clot that has formed. It prevents the clot from getting bigger and spreading. This is important for 2 types of patients:

- People who have a blood clot in the lung called a Pulmonary Emboli (PE).
  - People who have a blood clot in the leg called a Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT).
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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.
- This medication is absorbed better in the stomach when taken with food. Take this medication with a meal.
- 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.

## **Who should know 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 foot doctors, as well as anyone else you consult.

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## 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 taken 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.

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

Call the health care provider that ordered this medication and report that you are having surgery or dental procedures. Your health care provider will arrange your anticoagulant therapy care.

Never stop this medication unless told to do so by the health care provider that ordered this medication for you.

If you are referred to the Bridging Clinic before surgery, the Thrombosis Team will manage your anticoagulant therapy care leading up to your hospital stay and while you are in hospital.

The Thrombosis Team will decide if and when you need to stop this medication. It is usually stopped 1 to 3 days before surgery to prevent bleeding during surgery. Some procedures, such as minor dental or cataract surgery, can be done without stopping this medication.

## **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.
- Keep your nostrils moist to avoid a nosebleed. You may need to gently apply a petroleum jelly such as Vaseline<sup>®</sup> inside your nostrils to keep them moist. You can also reduce the risk for nosebleeds by using a humidifier in your house, especially in the winter months when the air is dry.
- If you have a nosebleed that you cannot stop, go to the Emergency Department for help.

**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 this medication for the rest of your pregnancy.

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

Talk to 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:

- Talk to your health care provider about your plans well in advance. You may need to take an extra supply of medication.
  - Make sure you have proper health care coverage.
  - Keep this medication in the original pharmacy container.
  - Carry this medication with you at all times. Do not store this 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 doses 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 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 of 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.

This medication can interact with many other medications, including herbal medications and products. Check with your health care provider or pharmacist before you start taking any new medication.

## 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

Do not stop taking this medication without checking with your health care provider first.

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

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



Tell the Emergency Department staff right away that you take this medication.

In general, contact your health care provider or talk to your pharmacist if you have any questions about this medication.