

Anticoagulants—New Oral Medications

- Follow your health care provider’s direction regarding all medications.
- Do not stop, restart, skip or take more medicine without first checking with health care provider.
- Make sure your medicines have not expired—check the dates!
- Keep a medication list and bring it to appointments.
- Tell all your healthcare providers and dentists that you are taking anticoagulants.
- Tell your health care provider and pharmacist about ALL medicines you are taking, including over-the-counter vitamins and herbal remedies.
- Tell your health care provider if you smoke tobacco or marijuana.
- Practice fall prevention by using assistive devices (e.g., cane, walker), avoiding alcohol, wearing well-fitting shoes, avoiding use of rugs in the home, and keeping your environment well-lit.

Green Flags—All Clear



If you:

- Take all medications as prescribed
- Have no bruising without an injury or major bleeding
- Experience only minor bleeding (e.g., small bruises, teeth that bleed a little bit during brushing or flossing—may be normal)

What this means ...

- Good work!

Keep up the great work!

Yellow Flags—Caution



If you have:

- Bleeding from the gums or nose.
- Joint pain or swelling.
- Difficulty with routine exercise
- Loss of appetite or unintentional weight loss
- Severe headache
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Red or dark brown urine
- Added, changed, or stopped any medicines, especially if you take Advil (ibuprofen) or other over-the-counter medicines with your anticoagulant medicine.

What this means ...

- You may need follow-up by your health care provider or at an anticoagulation clinic.
- The anticoagulant may be causing side effects.

If you do not have Home Care, call your health care provider:

Name:

Number:

If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team.

Red Flags—Stop and Think



If you have:

- Rectal bleeding or red blood in your stool
- Black or tarry stools
- Arm, back, or jaw pain
- Coughed up blood that looks like coffee grounds
- Gum or nose bleeding that does not stop < 15 minutes
- Blue or purple toes
- Change in consciousness
- Chest tightness or heaviness increase that does not stop
- Fast or irregular heartbeat
- Trouble breathing with exertion
- Severe abdominal pain or stomach pain
- A fall or injury, especially to the head
- “Thunderclap” headache (very severe, quick onset)

What this means ...

- You could have internal bleeding and need to be seen by a healthcare provider as soon as possible.

You need to be evaluated by a health care professional immediately. Follow these instructions:

CALL 9-1-1

If possible, notify your health care provider’s office.

Name:

Number:

If you notice a Red Flag, CALL 9-1-1. Emergency!

Anticoagulant—New Oral Medications Fast Facts

Dabigatran (Pradaxa), Rivaroxaban (Xarelto) Apixaban (Eliquis)

- An anticoagulant is a substance that prevents *coagulation* (clotting) of blood. This reduces blood clotting in an artery, a vein, or the heart.
- A clot can block the blood flow to your heart muscle and cause a heart attack. A clot can also block blood flow to your brain, causing a stroke. Clots can also form in the lung, legs, joints, or arms.
- Anticoagulant medicines are prescribed by your health care provider for various reasons. Sometimes it is to prevent blood clots from forming, lower your chance of a blood clot forming, or to give your body time to dissolve a clot on its own.
- Sometimes referred to as a “blood thinner,” anti-coagulants do not thin the blood. The medicine reduces the ability of the blood to form clots.
- New oral anticoagulant medicines do not require the same blood test monitoring as other anticoagulants, e.g., Warfarin (Coumadin); however, your health care provider may still want to do blood tests, particularly if you are taking a high dose of the new oral anticoagulant. Your kidney function may also be monitored to make sure your body is processing the medicine safely.
- Dabigatran (Pradaxa) is the only one of the new anticoagulant agents that has an FDA approved reversal agent: Idarucizumab (Praxbind). This means that if you accidentally take too much dabigatran or have a sudden serious injury, there is a medicine that can reverse the effects of Dabigatran. Dabigatran also has special storage instructions that require it to be stored in its original medicine bottle.
- Vitamins and supplements can easily interact with your medicines and, if taken together, may be harmful to your health. These may also be harmful for certain health conditions or medical procedures.
- Medicines taken in combination with new oral anticoagulants may cause you to bleed more easily. This includes, but is not limited to, some antibiotics, pain medications like Advil or Motrin (Ibuprofen), Aleve (Naproxen), aspirin, certain heart/blood pressure medications, some HIV/AIDS medications, and some antifungal medicines.
- Alcohol **increases your risk of bleeding** in your stomach or intestines; therefore, it is best to avoid alcohol when taking an anticoagulant. If you do drink alcohol, consult your health care provider about how to do so safely.

What can you do?

- Take all medicines only as prescribed. Do not take more or less medicine without talking with your health care provider.
- Inform your health care provider about all medicines you are taking, including over-the-counter medicines and supplements.
- All anticoagulant medicines can increase your risk of bleeding, so use caution to prevent falls and/or injuries. Use extra caution when brushing your teeth or shaving to avoid cuts or injury to the gums or skin.
- Follow your health care provider’s directions for any blood work or urine tests needed for monitoring while you are taking an anticoagulant.
- Tell your health care providers and dentist you are taking an anticoagulant. This is especially important to communicate before having any surgery.
- Keep all medicines out of the reach of children and pets. Never share your medicine with anyone.

Aging and Disability Services

Aging and Disability Services (ADS)—the Area Agency on Aging for King County—plans, coordinates, and advocates for comprehensive services for older adults, family caregivers, and people with disabilities throughout Seattle and King County. For information about services or interpretation assistance, call 844-348-5464 or e-mail info@communitylivingconnections.org.



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