



**University  
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A 24-hour nurse telephone service for  
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## What is Rivaroxaban (Xarelto®)?

Rivaroxaban (brand name Xarelto®) is an anticoagulant medicine. “Anti” means against and “coagulant” refers to blood clotting. An anticoagulant helps keep clots from forming in your blood. They also help stop blood clot growth. Anticoagulants are sometimes called “blood-thinners,” but they do not actually thin your blood. They work by blocking the part of your blood that normally forms clots.

### Why am I taking rivaroxaban?

Rivaroxaban is prescribed to patients who have existing clots or a high risk of developing clots, such as people who have:

- Blood clot in the legs (deep vein thrombosis or DVT)
- Blood clot in the lungs (pulmonary embolism or PE)
- Irregular heart rhythms (for example atrial fibrillation)
- Narrowed arteries (chronic coronary artery disease (CAD) or peripheral artery disease (PAD))
- Hip or knee replacement surgery (postoperative clot prevention)

### How does rivaroxaban work?

Many steps must happen inside the body to form a blood clot. Proteins called the clotting factors are involved in this process.

Rivaroxaban blocks the clotting factor called *factor Xa*, which will then keep clots from forming and can prevent the clots from getting larger. Rivaroxaban does not break up clots that already exist.

Rivaroxaban begins to reduce blood clotting within a few hours after taking the first dose. If you stop taking rivaroxaban, its effects can wear off in about 24 hours for most people.

### How is rivaroxaban taken?

Rivaroxaban is taken by mouth (orally) and comes in 2.5 mg, 10 mg, 15mg and 20 mg tablets. The dose will depend on why you are taking rivaroxaban (see below) and how well your kidneys are working. Your doctor will decide which dose is right for you and for how long. **Do not stop taking it without first talking with your doctor. Stopping rivaroxaban may increase your risk of having a clot.**

- **Atrial fibrillation**
  - Take rivaroxaban once a day with your evening meal as prescribed by your doctor
- **DVT/PE**
  - Take rivaroxaban once or twice a day as prescribed by your doctor
  - Take rivaroxaban with food at the same time each day
- **After hip or knee replacement surgery**
  - Take rivaroxaban once a day with or without food
- **Chronic CAD or PAD**
  - Take rivaroxaban twice a day PLUS aspirin 75-100mg once a day

### **What if I miss a dose of rivaroxaban?**

- Take the missed dose as soon as you remember. But if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your normal dose time
  - EXCEPT if taking twice a day dosing – take the missed dose as soon as you remember. You may take 2 doses at the same time to make up for the missed doses. Take your next dose at your normal dosing time
- If you become sick and cannot take rivaroxaban, contact your doctor

### **Are there any times I should stop taking rivaroxaban?**

- **Do not stop taking it without first talking with your doctor. Stopping rivaroxaban may increase your risk of having a clot.**
- Your doctor may tell you to stop taking rivaroxaban for 1 or more days before medical or dental procedures and surgeries.
- If you need to stop taking rivaroxaban for any reason, call your doctor. Find out when you should stop taking it, and the doctor will also tell you when to start taking rivaroxaban again after your procedure or surgery.

### **Would my blood need to be tested while taking rivaroxaban?**

You do not need routine blood testing to check the amount of rivaroxaban in your body. Your doctor will want blood tests from time to time to check the health of your blood, kidneys, and liver. These tests will help to make sure you are on the most appropriate dose. **It is very important to keep all follow-up appointments for lab tests and with your doctor.**

## What are the side effects of rivaroxaban?

The most common and serious side effect of rivaroxaban is bleeding.

Minor bleeds may occur. Examples include:

- Gums bleeding when you brush your teeth
- Nosebleeds
- Easy bruising
- More bleeding than normal from small cuts
- For women, longer or heavier menstrual bleeding

For more serious bleeds, call your doctor or come to the hospital emergency room right away if you:

- Have a serious fall or hit your head
- Have any of these symptoms:
  - Bleeding in your eyes
  - Red or dark brown urine
  - Red or black tarry stool
  - Vomiting or coughing up blood
  - Severe headache or stomachache
  - Bruises that appear for no known reason
  - Nosebleeds, bleeding gums, or unusual bleeding that keeps happening
  - Any bleeding that does not stop or is very heavy

## Does rivaroxaban affect other medicines?

Talk to your doctor before starting any new drugs, including over the counter, prescription, herbal products and vitamins. Some drugs can raise your risk of bleeding if you take them while on rivaroxaban. Some medicines can increase or decrease the amount of rivaroxaban in your body. If you are taking rivaroxaban, do **NOT** take any of these medicines without first checking with your doctor:

- Aspirin or products that contain aspirin, such as Excedrin, Alka-Seltzer, Bayer, Bufferin, Nyquil, and Pepto-Bismol
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), celecoxib (Celebrex), diclofenac (Cataflam, Voltaren), indomethacin (Indocin), meloxicam (Mobic), nabumetone (Relafen), naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn)
- Warfarin (Coumadin), dabigatran (Pradaxa), apixaban (Eliquis), and any medicine that contains heparin
- Clopidogrel (Plavix), prasugrel (Effient), ticagrelor (Brilinta)
- Certain heart or blood pressure medicines like verapamil (Calan SR, Verelan), amiodarone (Nexterone, Pacerone), and dronedarone (Multaq)
- Certain seizure medicines like carbamazepine (Carbatrol, Tegretol), phenobarbital, phenytoin (Dilantin)

### **Is it safe to consume alcohol while taking rivaroxaban?**

It is best to avoid alcohol while taking rivaroxaban as there is a higher risk of bleeding in your stomach and intestines.

If you choose to drink alcohol, do not have more than 2 standard drinks a day. [1 drink = 1 beer (12 oz.), or 1 glass of wine (5 oz.), or 1 cocktail (2-3 oz.), or 1 shot (1.5 oz.)]

### **Do I need to avoid certain foods while taking rivaroxaban?**

There are no eating restrictions. You can eat all types of foods while you are taking the medication.

### **Should I limit activities while taking rivaroxaban?**

Since rivaroxaban increases your risk of bleeding, it is best to avoid activities that can cause an injury. Activities such as walking, jogging, or swimming are usually safe options. Use a soft toothbrush and electric razor. If you have questions about a certain activity, tell your doctor what it is and they will tell you if it is safe to continue.

### **What about pregnancy?**

Rivaroxaban has not been studied in pregnant women. If you become pregnant or plan to become pregnant while taking this medication, call your doctor right away.

### **Who should I tell about taking rivaroxaban?**

Tell all of your healthcare providers that you are taking rivaroxaban. This includes your doctors, dentist, and pharmacists. You may also carry a wallet card or wear a medical alert bracelet or necklace that says you take rivaroxaban.

### **When to Get Help Right Away**

Call your doctor or go to the nearest emergency room right away if you have any of these symptoms:

- Sudden weakness in an arm or leg
- Sudden numbness or tingling anywhere in your body
- Changes in your eyesight or not being able to see out of one or both eyes
- Suddenly having slurred speech or not being able to speak
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- New pain, swelling, redness, or heat in your arm, leg, or foot
- New shortness of breath or chest pain

**These symptoms may represent a serious emergency. Do NOT wait to see if the symptoms will go away. Get medical help right away. Call your local emergency service (911 in the U.S.). Do not drive yourself to the hospital.**