

Edoxaban

Edoxaban is an oral anticoagulant, also known as a blood thinner, used to reduce the risk of blood clots and stroke in people with atrial fibrillation. This sheet offers information for those that have been offered this medication.

AF and stroke risk

People who have atrial fibrillation (AF) are at higher risk of blood clots forming in the heart. If your heartbeat is irregular and fast, your heart may not have a chance to empty properly before filling up with blood again. Blood can collect inside the upper chamber of the left side of the heart (the left atrium), and this increases the risk of blood clots forming. If these clots travel through the bloodstream to the brain then this may cause a stroke.

AF-related strokes are often more serious than other strokes. This is because the large clots which form in the heart can cause more damage resulting in more disability.

To reduce the risk of stroke an anticoagulant is often prescribed. An anticoagulant lengthens the time a clot takes to form by just enough to address any risk of stroke.

Until recently there was only one commonly prescribed anti-coagulant - Warfarin - a very effective medication, dramatically reducing the risk of stroke. Warfarin requires regular monitoring as its effectiveness can vary due to lifestyle, dietary intake, general health and other prescribed medications. Monitoring involves a blood test to check international normalised ratio (INR) levels. The result determines the dose of warfarin.

In recent years further anticoagulants have been developed. These are the direct oral anticoagulants (DOACs), and include apixaban, dabigatran, rivaroxaban and edoxaban. Unlike warfarin, they do not require blood tests as they are unaffected by dietary intake, lifestyle or general health. DOACs also interact less with other medications. Apixaban and rivaroxaban's anticoagulation effect can be

reversed if necessary in an emergency. The DOACs are as effective as warfarin in preventing an AF-related stroke.

How it works

Edoxaban is a direct factor Xa inhibitor, meaning it directly blocks the activity of factor Xa (ten A), a key protein in the blood clotting process.

By inhibiting factor Xa, edoxaban reduces the production of thrombin, another protein essential for clot formation.

By slowing down the blood clotting process, edoxaban helps prevent the formation of dangerous blood clots in the arteries and veins.

Edoxaban is licensed in the UK for use in nonvalvular AF patients to reduce the increased risk of stroke caused by AF. It is also approved for other indications specifically treatment and prevention of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism, which is a blood clot in the lungs.

Dose

The recommended dose of edoxaban is 60mg once daily. If your kidney function is impaired, you have low body weight or you are taking other medication that affects the amount of edoxaban required to be effective, you may be offered a lower dose of 30mg once daily. Talk to your doctor who will advise on the best dose for you.

Before starting treatment, your doctor should talk to you about the risks and benefits of edoxaban compared with other alternatives such as warfarin. The requirement for regular monitoring with warfarin reinforces the importance of treatment. Therefore, the lack of monitoring with edoxaban requires strict adherence from patients.

How do I take edoxaban?

Edoxaban should be swallowed preferably with water. It can be taken with or without food. Taking your tablet at the same time every day helps to make it part of your daily routine, which can help you to

remember.

Other things you can do to help you remember to take edoxaban every day are:

- Use your mobile phone

Download an app on your smart phone to help you remember to take your edoxaban and other medications, or set an alarm to remind you.

- Use a pill box

If you have a lot of different medications to take you might find it easier to use a pill box or organiser so you remember which tablets to take each day. These can be purchased from most pharmacies.

What do I do if I forget to take edoxaban?

If you remember on the same day, take the tablet immediately and then take your usual dose the next day.

If you remember the next day or later, take your usual dose for that day. NEVER double the prescribed dose in a single day. It is very important to take the tablets exactly as directed. Never take larger or more frequent doses.

What about the potential side effects?

Like other oral anticoagulant medication edoxaban is designed to thin your blood and help prevent blood clots. So you may have an increased risk of bleeding while taking it. It is important to be aware of potential bleeding symptoms like bruising, excessive bleeding, or blood in the urine or stool. It is also important to inform doctors and dentists that you take edoxaban before starting any new medication or before having a procedure or operation.

What to do if you notice bleeding

Speak to your doctor immediately if you experience any of the following signs of bleeding:

- Bruising or bleeding under the skin
- Nose bleeds or cuts that take a long time to stop bleeding
- Red or dark brown urine
- Coughing up or vomiting blood or ground coffee-like material
- Red or black stools
- Bleeding gums
- Bleeding that does not stop by itself
- Abnormally heavy periods

Bleeding is not always obvious. If you experience any side effects talk to your doctor or pharmacist. It is important not to stop taking edoxaban without talking to them first.

For further information on anticoagulants, please see AF Association's Preventing AF-related stroke: anticoagulation booklet.

To view our patient resources, scan the QR code below:



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