

Anticoagulation A Patients Guide

What does anticoagulation treatment do?

Anticoagulation medication alters the clotting factors in your blood, increasing the length of time it takes for your blood to clot. The reason you are on this medication will be explained to you by either the doctor, Anticoagulation nurse specialist or pharmacist.

What are the reasons for needing anticoagulation treatment?

There are many conditions that require this treatment some of the most common are listed below:

- Atrial fibrillation.
- Replacement heart valves.
- Stroke/TIA (Transient ischaemic attack).
- Arterial thrombosis.
- Thrombosis within the heart.
- Peripheral vascular disease.
- Certain blood clotting disorders.
- Pulmonary Embolism / Deep Vein Thrombosis.
- To prevent the formation of blood clots.

How will my condition be treated?

There are currently various treatment options available. Most are in tablet form but some are given by injection. The appropriate treatment for you will be discussed and fully explained by your nurse, doctor, or pharmacist. You will be given specific written information relating to your prescribed treatment which will answer many of your questions

- If you are prescribed injectable anticoagulation (Heparins) please advise your health care professional if you have a latex allergy or have concerns about receiving a drug that is derived from animal origins.
- If you are prescribed either Apixaban or Rivaroxaban tablets, please advise your health care professional if you have a lactose intolerance.

What are the possible side effects of the treatment?

If you take your medication as recommended, it is less likely that you will experience any problems. However all anticoagulants increase the risk of bleeding, and It is essential that if you experience any of the following, you must contact your GP immediately, or go to your nearest Accident and Emergency Department:

- Blood in your stools, or black stools.
- Blood in your urine.
- Coughing up or vomiting blood.
- Heavy or persistent nosebleeds.
- Unexplained or severe bruising.
- Severe menstrual bleeding in women.

General advice

- Other medication: Always check with your GP or pharmacist before taking any medication, including herbal or alternative treatments, to ensure they are safe to take with your treatment. **Please advise any healthcare professional that you are taking an anticoagulant.**
- Appropriate pain relief, if required, will be discussed with you. Please avoid over the counter Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as Ibuprofen.
- Please do not take Aspirin unless prescribed by a health care professional.
- Carry the alert card which is provided with your medication.
- Seek medical attention if you experience a significant blow to the head.
- Speak to your GP if you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy.

References and further information:

www.nhs.uk

www.thrombosisuk.org

www.bhf.org.uk

How to contact the Anticoagulant Nurse Specialists:

Tel: 01603 286286 bleep 0799 or

Tel: 01603 287809

VTE Clinic

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