Helping prevent blood clots after hip and knee replacement surgery

This booklet is intended for adult patients prescribed ELIQUIS® (apixaban) following elective hip or knee replacement surgery

Always read the patient information leaflet in your medication package.
Contents

What is venous thromboembolism (VTE)? 4

What causes VTE? 9

How can VTE be prevented? 10

About ELIQUIS® (apixaban) 13

Things to be aware of when taking ELIQUIS® (apixaban)? 20

Getting support 28

Your future appointments 30

Notes 31
You have been given this booklet because you have been prescribed ELIQUIS® (apixaban) for the prevention of blood clots following hip or knee replacement surgery.

This medicine will play a part in your recovery by helping prevent the possible formation of blood clots. This booklet will explain how and provide you with some information to help you during this time. You should also read the patient information leaflet provided inside your medicine package.
What is venous thromboembolism (VTE)?

Venous means related to the veins. A thrombosis occurs when a blood vessel which carries blood around the body gets blocked by a blood clot (a thrombus). If a blood clot dislodges from where it was formed and travels in the blood until it becomes stuck in a narrower blood vessel elsewhere in the body, it is called an embolus.
A deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot that forms in the deep leg veins that run through the muscles of the calf and thighs. A DVT can partially or completely block the blood flow in the vein causing symptoms of pain, tenderness, and swelling of the calf which can sometimes become warm and red. In some situations there are no symptoms and a DVT is only diagnosed if a complication occurs such as a pulmonary embolism.
A pulmonary embolism (PE) is where some of the clot from a DVT breaks off and travels to the narrower vessels of the lungs where it gets stuck, blocking the blood flow to a part of the lung. Symptoms of a PE include chest pain and breathlessness and need urgent treatment. Other common symptoms include cough (with or without blood stained mucus) and fast heart rate (tachycardia). If you experience any of these symptoms, you must seek medical attention immediately — call 999.

Venous thromboembolism (VTE) is a word used to describe both DVTs and PEs.
What causes VTE?

Blood clotting is a natural process which helps stop bleeding. Movement of the leg muscles helps to squeeze blood through the deep leg veins back to the heart helping to maintain normal blood flow.

If blood begins to flow slower than normal through the veins it can start to clot. This is more likely to occur during periods of reduced mobility such as during or after surgery. The risk of these clots forming is also increased after major surgery when the blood thickens in an attempt to stop blood loss and heal blood vessels damaged during surgery.

While not everyone will get a blood clot, some types of VTE may be serious, so it’s really important to try to prevent these clots forming in the first place.
How can VTE be prevented?

The risks of VTE can be reduced in the following ways:

**Compression stockings:**
These stockings compress our lower limbs preventing blood pooling in the deep veins helping to maintain normal blood flow.

**Leg and foot exercises:** Your physiotherapist will give you an exercise programme to follow after your operation. Exercising your feet and leg muscles helps to maintain normal blood flow in the deep veins.

**Drinking plenty of fluids:**
Keeping well hydrated can help to reduce the risks of blood clots.
Intermittent Pneumatic Compression (IPC) machines:
This method is only used for some patients while they are in hospital. If mobility is severely limited these machines can be used to squeeze the leg muscles (by inflating and deflating) to maintain normal blood flow.

**Anticoagulants** are medicines that work by altering the time it takes your blood to clot and the way in which it clots, making a clot formation less likely. Some anticoagulants are injectable, others are available as tablets or capsules.

Your doctor may have chosen one or more of these preventative measures to help reduce your risk of a VTE.
Picture is not an actual representation of ELIQUIS® tablets.
About ELIQUIS® (apixaban):

Why have you been prescribed ELIQUIS® (apixaban)?

This medicine is used in adults to help prevent blood clots from forming after hip or knee replacement operations.

It contains the active substance apixaban and belongs to a group of medicines called anticoagulants. This medicine helps to prevent blood clots from forming by blocking one of the agents that causes blood clotting (known as Factor Xa).
Picture is not an actual representation of ELIQUIS® tablets.
How do I take ELIQUIS® (apixaban)?

You should always take your medicine exactly as your doctor has told you to ensure that it is working for you.

This medicine must always be taken twice a day. For example, one in the morning and one in the evening. Try to take the tablets at the same times every day.

To help you remember, perhaps try to fit taking your tablets with a normal routine that happens twice a day. You should also read the patient information leaflet that came with your medication.

You should swallow the tablet with a glass of water. It can be taken with or without food. If you have difficulty swallowing tablets, talk to your doctor.
How long is the treatment course?

The length of treatment can vary depending on the type of surgery you have had. You should always follow your doctors instructions and continue to take your medication for as long as your doctor has told you to do so.
DO NOT STOP TAKING ELIQUIS® (apixaban) WITHOUT DISCUSSING IT WITH YOUR DOCTOR FIRST!
Frequently asked questions:

What should I do if I miss a dose?

If you miss a dose, take the medicine as soon as you remember and then take the next tablet at the usual time, then continue as normal. If you are not sure what to do, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

What should I do if I take too much?

Tell your doctor immediately if you have taken more than the prescribed dose. Take the medicine pack with you, even if there are no tablets left. If you take more tablets than recommended, you may have an increased risk of bleeding.
Things to be aware of when taking ELIQUIS® (apixaban)

■ Inside the tablet pack together with the package leaflet you will find a Patient Alert Card or your doctor might give you a similar card. It is important you carry this card with you at all times while you are taking this medicine. Show the alert card to your pharmacist, dentist and other healthcare professionals that treat you.

■ Inform your doctor and dentist that you are taking ELIQUIS® (apixaban) if you are having any surgical or dental procedures. You may need to reduce your dose or temporarily stop taking this medicine and your doctor or dentist will advise you on how to do this.
Make sure that you tell your doctor, pharmacist or dentist about any other medicines you are taking, including medicines you have bought yourself in the pharmacy without a prescription (e.g. aspirin for headaches or colds) and any herbal remedies you may be taking (e.g. St. John’s Wort).

Certain medicines and supplements can interfere with the anticoagulant effects of this medicine increasing the risk of bleeding or making it less effective. A list of medicines that might affect ELIQUIS® (apixaban) can be found in the patient information leaflet inside the medicine package.
As with all anticoagulants, when taking this medicine it is important that you look out for any signs of bleeding and seek medical advice immediately if any signs of bleeding occur.

You should not take ELIQUIS® (apixaban) if you are allergic to any of the ingredients, if you are bleeding excessively, if you have (or are thought to have) a condition that increases the risk of serious bleeding, if you have liver disease leading to an increased risk of bleeding or if you are taking medicines to prevent blood clotting.
In addition, this medicine is not recommended in other instances such as pregnancy, breast feeding, in patients with prosthetic heart valves (with and without atrial fibrillation), and in patients taking certain other medications (please read the patient information leaflet for the full list). Please tell your doctor straight away if you think any of these apply to you.

Please ensure that you read the patient information leaflet (inserted in the medicine packaging) thoroughly before taking the medicine.
Possible side effects

Like all medicines, ELIQUIS® (apixaban) can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them. Like other similar medicines (anticoagulants), this medicine may cause bleeding which may potentially be life threatening. The bleeding may not be obvious and could possibly lead to anaemia (a low blood count which can cause tiredness or paleness). Other common side effects include bruising and swelling and nausea (feeling sick).
Further information on possible side effects can be found in the information leaflet inside your pack of tablets.

Tell your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about any side effects you experience, even if they are not listed in the patient information leaflet or in this booklet.

You can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine by reporting any side effects you may get. See www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard for how to report side effects. Side effects should also be reported to Bristol-Myers Squibb Medical Information on 0800 731 1736 or medical.information@bms.com
IMPORTANT INFORMATION INSIDE YOUR PACK OF ELIQUIS® (apixaban)

You will find a Patient Information Leaflet together with a Patient Alert Card inside your pack of ELIQUIS® (apixaban). You should read the Patient Information Leaflet and complete the Patient Alert Card (or ask your doctor to do it). The Patient Alert Card should be kept with you at all times. The Patient Alert Card explains the importance of taking ELIQUIS® (apixaban) regularly as instructed by your doctor, lists the main signs and symptoms of bleeding and when to seek medical attention.
Patient Alert Card

Eliquis®
(apixaban)

Carry this card with you at all times

Show this card to your pharmacist, dentist and any other healthcare professionals that treat you
GETTING SUPPORT

There are a number of UK organisations which provide invaluable help, information and support to people affected by deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism.

Here are the contact details of some organisations you may find useful:

**Anticoagulation UK**
Website: www.anticoagulationuk.org
Email: info@anticoagulationuk.org

Provides information and support for people on anticoagulant medications and their healthcare professionals.
Thrombosis UK
Telephone: 0300 772 9603
(Monday to Thursday 10am – 4pm)
Website: www.thrombosisuk.org
Email: admin@thrombosisuk.org
Dedicated to promoting awareness, research and care of thrombosis
## Your future appointments

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