

Rivaroxaban

What is rivaroxaban?

Rivaroxaban (sounds like 'riv-a-rox-a-ban') is an anticoagulant or 'blood thinner'. It is used to prevent and treat blood clots by slowing down your body's ability to clot blood. Preventing blood clots helps lower your risk of stroke. You may be prescribed rivaroxaban:

- if you have atrial fibrillation (irregular heart beat), which increases your risk of stroke
- after hip or knee surgery when your risk of blood clots is increased
- to treat deep vein thrombosis (DVT) – blood clots that form in blood vessels, usually in your legs or arms
- to prevent DVTs from forming again.

What dose of rivaroxaban?

Rivaroxaban tablets are available in different strengths: 10 mg, 15 mg and 20 mg. Your doctor or pharmacist will tell you the strength that is right for you. Your dose of rivaroxaban and the length of time you will take it will depend on what it is being used for.

My dose

My dose of rivaroxaban	
<p>I am taking rivaroxaban for:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Atrial fibrillation, to prevent stroke</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> After hip or knee surgery, to prevent clots</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> To treat clots (DVT/PE)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> To prevent clots from forming again</p>
<p>My dose is:</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>For how long:</p> <p>_____</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep taking rivaroxaban as your doctor has told you to. • Stopping early can put you at greater risk of getting blood clots or stroke. 	

How to take rivaroxaban

Know your tablet strength



Rivaroxaban tablets are available in different strengths:

- 10 mg, 15 mg and 20 mg
- Check which strength you are taking.

Testing and monitoring



When you first start taking rivaroxaban, you will need blood tests to check how well your kidneys and liver are working.

- This will help your doctor make sure it is safe for you and the dose is correct.
- Regular blood testing to check the level of rivaroxaban is not needed.

Take with food



Rivaroxaban is best taken with food.

- Swallow your tablets with a glass of water.
- If you have problems swallowing your tablets, tell your pharmacist.
- Take your rivaroxaban dose about the same time each day.

Don't run out



Missing doses increases your risk of getting blood clots.

- Make sure you don't run out of tablets – refill your prescription early.

Tell your health professionals



Make sure to tell any other health professionals you see (such as your dentist, pharmacist, podiatrist, nurse) that you are taking rivaroxaban.

- You may need to stop using this medicine for several days before having surgery, dental appointments or medical tests.

If you miss a dose



If you're taking rivaroxaban ONCE A DAY and you miss a dose

- Take it as soon as you remember on the same day.

- Don't take double the dose – this increases your risk of bleeding.

If you're taking rivaroxaban 15 mg TWO times A DAY and you miss a dose

- Take two 15 mg tablets at the same time to get a total dose of 30 mg in one day.
- Continue your regular dose, morning and evening, the next day.

Changing from warfarin or dabigatran



If you are being changed from other blood thinners, like warfarin or dabigatran, to rivaroxaban, follow your doctors instructions about the timing of your doses, very carefully.

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure.

Interactions with other medicines



Rivaroxaban interacts with many other medicines and herbal supplements such as ibuprofen, diclofenac, aspirin, carbamazepine, phenytoin and St John's Wort.

- This can mean your medicines don't work the way they are meant to, or you may have more side effects.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist before starting rivaroxaban or before starting any new medicines, including herbal medicines or vitamins or medicines that you buy yourself such as pain relief.

Pregnancy or breastfeeding



Rivaroxaban must NOT be taken during pregnancy or if you're breastfeeding.

- If you plan to become pregnant or think you are pregnant, tell your doctor as soon as possible.

Possible side effects

Like all medicines, rivaroxaban can cause side effects, although not everyone gets them.

Common side effects include nausea (feeling sick), indigestion, tummy cramps and headache. These may go away with time. Tell your doctor if troublesome.

Injuries: You might bleed or bruise more easily while you are taking rivaroxaban.

- Be careful when shaving, clipping fingernails, brushing and flossing your teeth or playing sports.
- Avoid new tattoos and piercings as these can cause bruising and bleeding.
- If you have a fall or hurt your head or body, get medical attention immediately, even if you feel okay.

Increased risk of bleeding

Rivaroxaban increases your risk of bleeding. If you have any of the following signs of bleeding, contact your doctor immediately or phone Healthline 0800 611 116 for free 24-hour health advice.

- becoming pale, very weak and tired or short of breath
- any bleeding from your gums, or cuts or nosebleeds that won't stop bleeding
- blood in your stools (poo) – black, tarry stools
- blood in your urine (wee) – pink, red or brown-coloured urine
- heavy periods (menstrual bleeding)
- coughing up blood or vomit that looks like coffee grounds.

Keep all medicines out of reach of children

Keep rivaroxaban out of reach and out of sight of children.

If you think a child or another person has taken rivaroxaban by mistake, contact your doctor, or phone Healthline 0800 611 116 straight away.



References

1. [Rivaroxaban New Zealand Formulary](#)
2. [Xarelto Consumer Medicine Information Medsafe, NZ](#)