

Apixaban: Information for patients with severe kidney failure

This information sheet will help you decide whether taking Apixaban is the right choice for you. Your doctor will answer any questions you have.

What is Apixaban?

Apixaban is a medicine that reduces blood clotting. In Australia it is usually used by patients who are at risk of getting blood clots from an irregular heart beat (atrial fibrillation). It is also used by patients who have had a blood clot in a deep vein.

Why am I being given an information sheet for this medicine?

Apixaban is not currently licensed to be used in Australia for people with severe kidney failure. Sometimes doctors will prescribe medicines for unlicensed (“off label”) use. If this happens, it is important that you have enough information to decide whether using that medicine is the best decision for you.

Any medicine that reduces blood clotting will increase your risk of bleeding. Bleeding can be minor, causing things like bruising, or more severe which could be life threatening. We do not know if your risk is higher when you have severe kidney disease.

Why has my doctor suggested I take Apixaban?

Apixaban and Warfarin are both medicines used to reduce the risk of blood clots. If you take Apixaban you will need fewer blood tests than if you take Warfarin. This is because Warfarin is affected by your diet and other medicines, whereas Apixaban usually is not.

All medicines have risks. Your doctor will talk with you about the risks of taking Apixaban.

There is no research to show that Apixaban and Warfarin are effective in treating dialysis patients. This is because all major clinical trials did not include people with kidney failure. This does not necessarily mean that the medicine is ineffective. In our clinical judgement there are benefits for you if you take this medicine.

Warfarin compared to Apixaban

Apixaban has a more consistent effect than Warfarin

- If you take Apixaban, we can be relatively confident that your blood will thin just the right amount when you are on the right dose. You won't have to worry if you change your diet. You should also be able to keep taking your other medicines, or start taking another medicine if you need it.
- If you take Warfarin, the amount your blood will thin can change. It can be affected if you change your diet or start taking a new medicine. If your blood doesn't thin enough, you are at risk of getting a blood clot. If your blood thins too much, you have a higher risk of bleeding.

Drug reversal

- If we need to stop the effects of Warfarin because you start bleeding badly, we can give you a medicine called vitamin K. Vitamin K can take a few hours to work.
- We don't have a way to quickly stop the effects of Apixaban. If you stop taking it, it will usually take about 2 days for it to wear off and you will have an increased risk of bleeding during this time.
- We recommend you don't take Apixaban if you are active on the deceased kidney donor transplant waiting list. It is likely surgery will not be performed if a donor kidney becomes available and you are taking Apixaban.

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