

# Rivaroxaban (Xarelto) for the Prevention of Venous Thromboembolism following surgery for lower limb and pelvic fractures

## Information for patients

This leaflet provides further information on rivaroxaban, which you have been prescribed. If you have any queries or concerns, please speak to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

---

### **What is rivaroxaban and what is it used for?**

- Rivaroxaban is an anticoagulant medicine
- Anticoagulants reduce the risk of blood clots developing

### **Why have I been prescribed rivaroxaban?**

Venous thromboembolism (VTE) is an umbrella term for a deep vein thrombosis (DVT - clot in the veins of your leg(s)) or a pulmonary embolism (PE - clot in the blood vessels of the lungs). Due to your recent injury and/or surgery, you may be at increased risk of developing a VTE, which may form around the injury or operation site, or in the legs due to reduced mobility. Clots can occur at any time, even before leaving the hospital – early mobility where possible is essential in helping to avoid clotting. Rivaroxaban is used to reduce the chances of developing a clot, and the complications associated with this.

### **Benefits of rivaroxaban?**

It cuts your risk of developing a deep vein thrombosis (clot in the deep veins of your legs or arms) or pulmonary embolism (clot in the blood vessels of the lungs), and the complications associated with either of these conditions.

### **How do I take rivaroxaban?**

- Rivaroxaban is taken once daily, at the same time each day
- Rivaroxaban tablets are best taken with food
- You do not have to avoid any particular food while taking rivaroxaban

- It is very important that you remember to take the rivaroxaban as advised. Missing doses may increase your risk of developing a VTE
- If you do miss a dose of rivaroxaban, you should take it as soon as you can and then continue the following day as usual. However, you should not double your dose to make up for a missed dose
- The recommended dosing for rivaroxaban for the prevention of venous thromboembolism in lower limb and/or pelvic fractures is **10mg once a day by mouth**
- Rivaroxaban is used to treat different patients for different reasons. Another person prescribed rivaroxaban may take a different dose from you. Always take rivaroxaban as directed by your doctor or pharmacists and ask them if you are unsure.

Rivaroxaban 10mg tablets are red round shaped tablets:



### How long do I need to take rivaroxaban for?

The doctor looking after you will decide exactly how long you need to take rivaroxaban for, depending on your injury, individual mobility, and level of risk of clot formation. The duration of treatment can vary, commonly between two weeks and three months following the injury, or surgery. For pelvic fractures, the duration is usually three months from injury. Rivaroxaban is not usually used long-term for prevention of venous thromboembolism in lower limb and/or pelvic fractures, however the duration may be extended if required. Your doctor or pharmacist will let you know how long you should take rivaroxaban for.

### What are the risks?

Rivaroxaban causes side effects such as dizziness and headaches in between 1 and 10 users in every 100. If you have either of these symptoms, please tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. They may prescribe you an alternative anticoagulant. If you feel dizzy or have headaches do **not** drive or use machinery.

Bleeding is a possible side effect of taking **any** anticoagulant and occasionally it can be serious. Serious bleeding affects 1 to 3 people out of 100. You should seek medical help straight away if you have bleeding, especially if you have any of the following:

- Coughing or vomiting blood
- Black stools or blood in your stools
- Severe, persistent headache, dizziness or weakness
- Fall or injury to your head or face
- Blood in your urine
- Unexplained or severe bruising
- Persistent nose bleeds
- Other unexpected or uncontrollable bleeding.

If you have any concerns about these risks, your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will discuss these with you in more detail.

## **Are there any alternatives?**

There are other anticoagulants you may be able to take. Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will discuss these with you, if appropriate.

## **Do I need blood tests when taking rivaroxaban?**

You will need to have a blood test before starting rivaroxaban. As the use of rivaroxaban for the prevention of VTE in lower limb and/or pelvic fractures is short term, further routine blood tests are not usually required. Occasionally, specialist blood tests may be required on your doctor's advice.

## **Can I take other medicines with rivaroxaban?**

It is important to let the doctor or pharmacist who prescribes rivaroxaban know all the other medicines you are currently taking. This includes any medicines you buy over the counter, because they might interfere with rivaroxaban and affect how it works.

If you start a new medicine, please tell the doctor that you are taking rivaroxaban.

If you are unsure about whether you can take a particular medicine with rivaroxaban, please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist for advice.

## **What else do I need to know when taking rivaroxaban?**

- Your risk of bleeding is increased whilst taking this medication – please take this into account before considering taking part in activities with a high risk of injury such as contact sports.
- It is not known if rivaroxaban is safe to use during pregnancy. If you become pregnant or plan to become pregnant, tell your doctor straight away.
- To reduce your risks of bleeding during surgery, minor procedures or dental work, please tell your doctor or dentist that you are taking rivaroxaban. You may need to stop taking it for a short period of time.
- You will be provided with an alert card. Carry this in your wallet or purse to make sure people know you are taking an anticoagulant.

## **What are the symptoms of VTE?**

Some people with a DVT may have no symptoms, but common symptoms of a DVT are:

- Pain/tenderness in the leg/calf
- Localised redness
- Localised swelling and a feeling of tightness, the skin may feel stretched

Some people may only realise they have a DVT when a pulmonary embolism (PE) develops as a result of the clot travelling to the lungs. Symptoms of a PE include:

- Chest pain that is sharp and is worse when taking a deep breath
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing – which is usually dry, but may include coughing up blood or mucus that contains blood
- Sweating
- Feeling light-headed or dizzy
- Passing out

**A VTE can be life threatening, so if you are concerned seek the advice of a doctor or go to the nearest A&E department.**

## **How do I find out more about rivaroxaban?**

Please ask your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or anticoagulation clinic for more information.

You can also call King's College Hospital anticoagulation clinics:

Tel: 020 3299 5553 King's College Hospital

Tel: 01689 864263 Princess Royal University Hospital

## **How do I find out more about deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolism?**

Please ask your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or anticoagulation clinic for more information.

You can also visit the Thrombosis UK website for further information:

<https://www.thrombosisuk.org/>

## **Sharing your information**

We have teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas'. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.

## **Care provided by students**

King's is a teaching hospital where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

## **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS:

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: [kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net)

You can also contact us by using our online form at [www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals](http://www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals)

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND.

Tel: 01689 863252

Email: [kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net)

**If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.**

[www.kch.nhs.uk](http://www.kch.nhs.uk)