

Rivaroxaban

What is rivaroxaban?

Rivaroxaban (sounds like 'riv-a-rox-a-ban') is an anticoagulant or 'blood thinner'. It slows down your body's ability to clot blood. It is used to prevent and treat blood clots. 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 the blood vessels, usually in the legs or arm
- 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 will depend on what it is being used for.

To prevent stroke in people with atrial fibrillation	20 mg once a day
To prevent clots after knee or hip surgery	10 mg once a day (usually for 2 to 5 weeks)
To treat blood clots	15 mg two times a day for 3 weeks, and then 20 mg once a day
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Your dose may be lower if you have other medical conditions such as problems with your kidneys. ➤ Keep taking rivaroxaban as your doctor has told you. ➤ Stopping too early can put you at greater risk of getting blood clots or stroke. 	

My dose

I am taking rivaroxaban for:	My dose is:	For how long:
<input type="checkbox"/> Atrial fibrillation, to prevent stroke <input type="checkbox"/> After hip or knee surgery, to prevent clots <input type="checkbox"/> Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) <input type="checkbox"/> _____		

How to take rivaroxaban

<p>Know your tablet strength</p> 	<p>Rivaroxaban tablets are available in different strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 10 mg, 15 mg and 20 mg ➤ Check which strength you are taking.
<p>Testing and monitoring</p> 	<p>When you first start taking rivaroxaban, you will need blood tests to check how well your kidneys and liver are working.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This will help your doctor make sure it is safe for you, and choose the right dose. ➤ No regular blood testing to check the level of rivaroxaban is needed.
<p>Take with food</p> 	<p>Rivaroxaban is best taken with food.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Swallow your tablets with a glass of water. ➤ If you can't swallow the tablet whole, crush it and mix it with a little water or apple puree just before taking it. ➤ Take your rivaroxaban dose about the same time each day.
<p>Don't run out</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Make sure you don't run out of tablets – refill your prescription early. ➤ Missing doses increases your risk of getting blood clots.
<p>Tell your health professionals</p> 	<p>Make sure to tell any other health professionals you see that you are taking rivaroxaban (such as your dentist, pharmacist, podiatrist, nurse).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ You may need to stop using this medicine for several days before having surgery, dental appointments or medical tests.

<p>If you miss a dose</p> 	<p>If you're taking rivaroxaban ONCE A DAY</p> <p>If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember on the same day. Do not take double the dose – this increases your risk of bleeding.</p> <p>If you're taking rivaroxaban 15 mg TWO times A DAY</p> <p>If you forget to take a dose you can 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.</p>
<p>Changing from warfarin or dabigatran</p> 	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure.
<p>Interactions with other medicines</p> 	<p>Rivaroxaban interacts with many other medications and herbal supplements such as ibuprofen, diclofenac, aspirin, carbamazepine, phenytoin and St Johns Wort. This can mean your medicines don't work the way they are meant to, or you may have more side effects.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Pregnancy or breastfeeding</p> 	<p>Rivaroxaban must NOT be taken during pregnancy or if you're breastfeeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 while taking rivaroxaban as these can cause bruising and bleeding.
- Minor bleeding should usually stop on its own.
- 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 ring Healthline for free 24hr health advice 0800 611 116.

- becoming pale, very weak and tired, or short of breath
- any bleeding from the gums, cuts or nosebleeds that won't stop
- blood in the stools (poo) – black, tarry stools
- blood in the 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 ring Healthline 0800 611 116 straight away.



References

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