

This booklet is only to be given to patients who have been prescribed Eliquis.

# Switching from warfarin to ELIQUIS<sup>®</sup> (apixaban)?

## Patient Information Booklet

Please always read the patient information leaflet in your ELIQUIS package.



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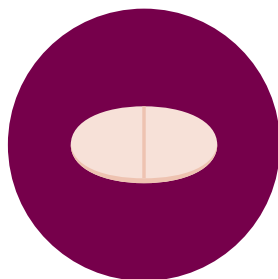


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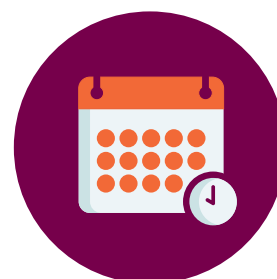


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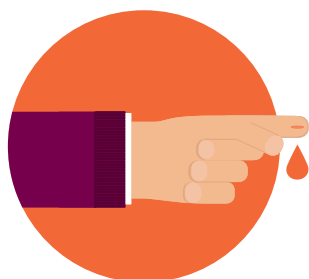
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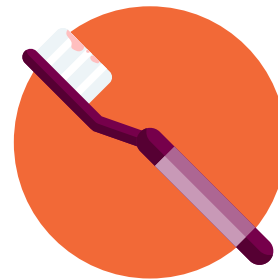
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# Introduction

If you are reading this booklet, you and your doctor have decided to switch your treatment from warfarin to ELIQUIS® (name of the active ingredient, apixaban), a type of medication known as a direct-acting oral anticoagulant (or DOAC). ELIQUIS is given to people who have atrial fibrillation (or AF), a heart condition, to help reduce the risk of a stroke.

Your doctor has prescribed ELIQUIS because they believe it is more suitable for you than warfarin to help reduce your risk of having a stroke due to AF.

This booklet aims to cover key information you may find useful if you have been prescribed ELIQUIS. It is intended to complement, but not replace, the information provided by your healthcare team.

As with any medication you are prescribed, you should also **read the Patient Information Leaflet thoroughly for a full overview.** It is provided inside your pack of ELIQUIS.

In this extraordinary time, your health remains a priority. It is important to protect yourself against potential

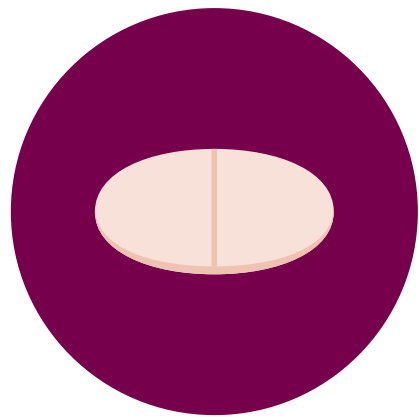
exposure to COVID-19 and minimise your chance of catching the virus that causes this disease.

Remember, you have a team of dedicated healthcare professionals trained to help you with your condition and treatment and to offer support. During this pandemic, you may be able to speak with your healthcare team over the phone, or via online video consultation tools, about any concerns or questions you may have.



# What is ELIQUIS®?

ELIQUIS contains the active ingredient apixaban. It is an anticoagulant. This type of medicine helps to prevent blood clots from forming. It does this by blocking one of the agents that causes blood clotting (known as factor Xa).



Tablets shown are not actual size.



# Why have I been switched to ELIQUIS®?

A clot (also known as a systemic embolism) may also travel to other organs and prevent normal blood flow to that organ.

**You and your doctor may have discussed some of these reasons to switch to ELIQUIS:**



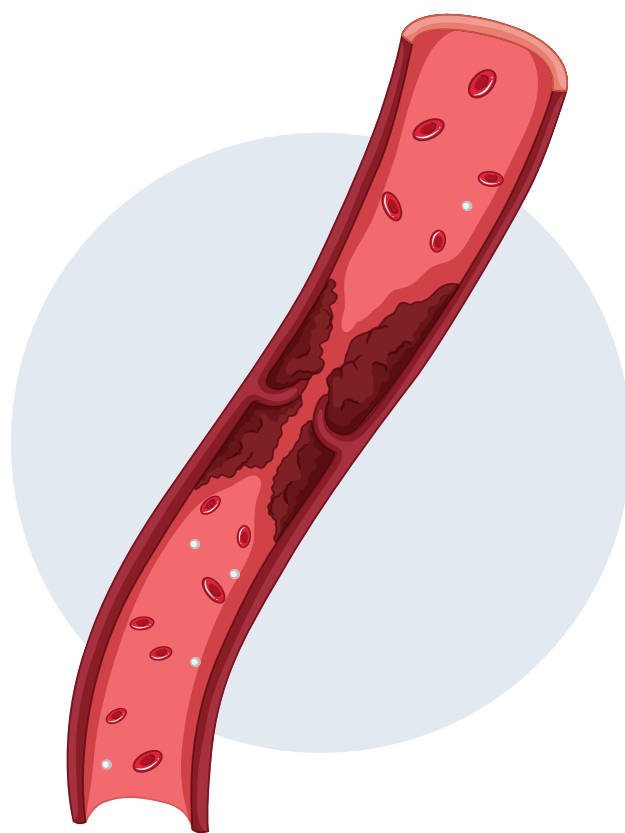
**INR monitoring** or frequent dose adjustment is **not required**



It can be taken **with or without food**



**Tablets may also be crushed and mixed with water**, 5% glucose in water, apple juice or mixed with apple puree, if your doctor advises this, if you have difficulty swallowing tablets



**If you have any further question please speak to your doctor.**

By switching from warfarin to ELIQUIS you will not need to self-monitor at home or travel to the hospital or clinic to undergo regular blood tests for INR monitoring.



# How do I switch to ELIQUIS®?

You will decide, with your doctor, on a day to stop taking your warfarin. Your doctor will also give you a prescription to fill for ELIQUIS, so you are ready to switch when the time is right, as outlined in the next few steps.

## Step one

The doctor or nurse will monitor your INR levels regularly over the next few days to assess when you are ready to start ELIQUIS.



## Step two

When the INR is less than 2.0, you will start taking ELIQUIS.

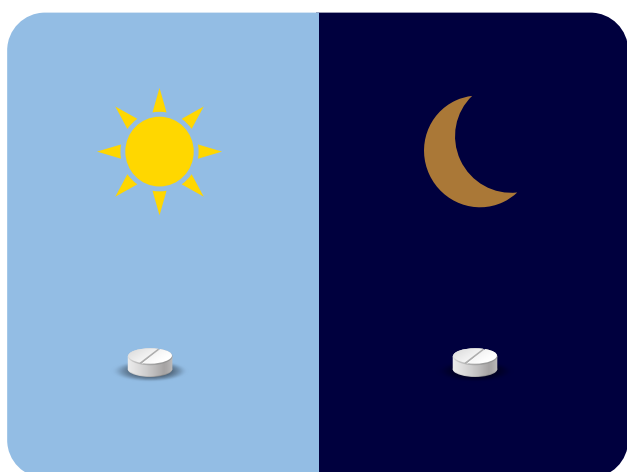
The usual dose of ELIQUIS is 5 mg twice daily. However certain groups of patients may be prescribed 2.5 mg twice daily by their doctor. Your doctor will prescribe you with the dose of ELIQUIS that is right for you.





# How do I take ELIQUIS®?

You should always take ELIQUIS exactly as your doctor has told you to ensure that ELIQUIS is working for you. Remember your dedicated team of healthcare professionals are available to help you.



Tablets shown are not actual size.

ELIQUIS 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.

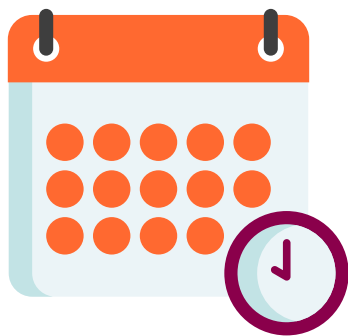
To help you remember, try to fit in taking your tablets with a normal routine that happens twice-a-day, for example, brushing your teeth.

- You should also read the Patient Information Leaflet that came inside your pack of ELIQUIS for more information.
- You should swallow the ELIQUIS tablet with a glass of water. It can be taken with or without food. If you have difficulty swallowing the tablet whole, talk to your doctor about other ways to take ELIQUIS.



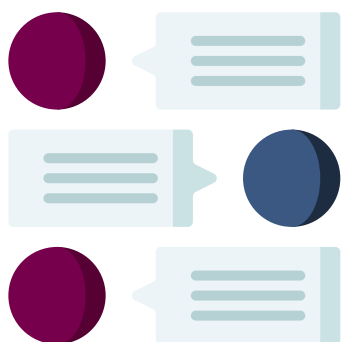
# How long do I need to take ELIQUIS®?

The length of treatment with ELIQUIS can vary depending on your treatment plan. You should always follow your doctor's instructions and continue to take your medication for as long as your doctor has told you to.



“ Do not stop taking ELIQUIS without discussing it with your doctor first ”

# Frequently asked questions



## What should I do if I miss a dose?

If you miss a dose of ELIQUIS, take the medicine as soon as you remember.

Then take the next tablet of ELIQUIS at the usual time and continue with twice daily intake as before.

**If you are not sure what to do, or have missed more than one dose, please remember that you should always call and speak to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. Please do not hesitate to contact them should you have any concerns.**

## What should I do if I take too much ELIQUIS?



**Tell your doctor immediately if you have taken more than your prescribed dose of ELIQUIS.**

Take the medicine pack with you, or have it to hand if calling your doctor, even if there are no tablets left. If you take more ELIQUIS than recommended, you may have an increased risk of bleeding.

If you are not sure what to do, or have missed more than one dose, speak to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

# Things to be aware of when taking ELIQUIS®

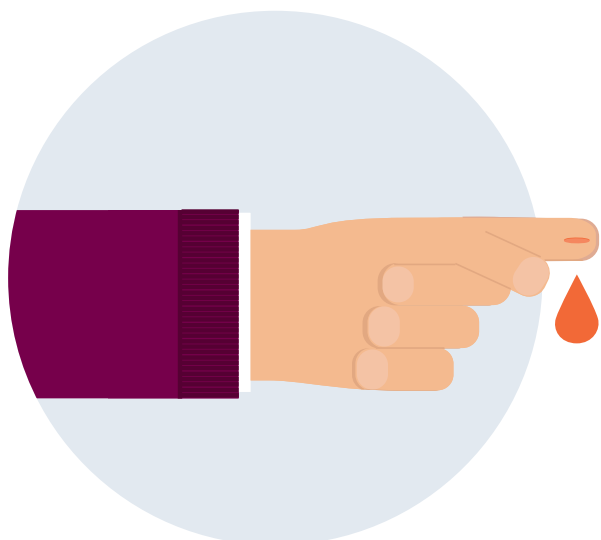
- Inform your doctor, dentist or pharmacist that you are taking ELIQUIS if you are having any surgical or dental procedures. You may need to reduce or temporarily stop taking ELIQUIS.
- Make sure that you tell your doctor, dentist or pharmacist about any other medicines you are taking, including other prescription medicines, non-prescription medicines and supplements.
- Certain medicines and supplements can interfere with the anticoagulant effects of ELIQUIS: they may increase the risk of bleeding or make it less effective. Discuss any other medicines or supplements you are taking with your doctor. A list of medicines that might affect ELIQUIS 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. You should seek medical advice immediately if any signs of bleeding occur and do not seem to stop.

## **You should not take ELIQUIS if:**

- you are allergic to any of the ingredients
- you are bleeding excessively
- you have (or are thought to have) a condition that increases the risk of bleeding
- you have liver disease leading to an increased risk of bleeding
- you are taking medicines to prevent blood clotting

**In addition, this medicine is not recommended in other instances**




**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)
- patients taking certain other medicines (please read the Patient Information Leaflet for the full list)
- in patients with end stage renal disease or who are on dialysis

Please tell your doctor straight away if you think any of these apply to you.

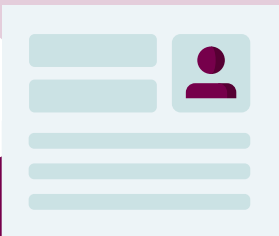
Please ensure that you read the Patient Information Leaflet (inserted in the medicine packaging) thoroughly before taking the medicine.



## 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. You should read the Patient Information Leaflet and complete the Patient Alert Card (or ask your doctor to do it or help you with it).

The Patient Alert Card should always be kept with you. The Patient Alert Card explains the importance of taking ELIQUIS regularly as instructed by your doctor. It lists the main signs and symptoms of bleeding and lets you know when to seek medical attention.



# Possible side effects

Like all medicines, ELIQUIS® can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

Like other similar medicines (anticoagulants), **this medicine may cause bleeding that can occur in different parts of the body.**

Sometimes this can be minor (e.g. your gums bleed more easily when you brush your teeth). Sometimes it can be more serious and may potentially be life-threatening and require immediate medical attention. If you, or those around you, notice any blood in your urine or vomit, or in your stool – please seek medical help immediately. Your healthcare team will know what to do.

**Side effects may include more bleeding than usual in your:**

- nose
- gums
- urine
- stools – as bright red or in the stools
- cough
- vagina



### Additional common side effects include:

- anaemia which may cause tiredness or paleness
- bruising and swelling
- low blood pressure which may make you feel faint or have a quickened heartbeat
- nausea (feeling sick)
- blood tests may show an increase in gamma-glutamyltransferase (GGT)

Further information on possible side effects can be found in the Patient Information Leaflet inside your tablet pack.

You can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine by reporting any side effects you may get.

**Reporting of side effects:** If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in the package leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via HPRA Pharmacovigilance at [www.hpra.ie](http://www.hpra.ie). By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine. Side effects should also be reported to Bristol-Myers Squibb Medical Information on 1 800 749 749 or [medical.information@bms.com](mailto:medical.information@bms.com)

*“ 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. ”*



# Living life with AF

Having AF can be worrying, but **with some lifestyle changes and with prescribed medication you can continue doing many of the things you used to do**. Consider the following lifestyle factors and how they may affect you.



- **Diet:** eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables and avoid fatty meats and too much processed food to help control your cholesterol levels. Lower your salt intake to help control high blood pressure, another health condition that contributes to AF.



- **Exercise:** even if you have AF you can still exercise. Regular physical activity not only helps with weight control, but can also help you to maintain a positive outlook. Consult your doctor before you start any new forms of exercise to establish whether it is safe for you, given your physical condition.



# How do I contact my doctor during COVID-19?

Your healthcare team may offer many ways of reaching them in order to minimise person-to-person exposure. This may be by telephone or video consultations, using tools such as Skype or of Zoom. They may also offer a texting service to address your queries.

It is important to stay in touch with your healthcare team. Together with your doctor, you should discuss the best way to connect to ensure you can remain in contact, especially during this pandemic.

“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.”

If you are not familiar with the technology you and your healthcare team have decided to use, ask for help from family, friends or a carer. They might have some simple and useful tips to share.

Remember that if you are not sure what to do, or have missed more than one dose, your healthcare providers are still there to support you.



**It is important you do not cancel or postpone your regular check-ups.**

# How do I prepare for a remote appointment?

## Before your remote appointment



- Think about what you want to get out of your appointment beforehand. This will help you to have more productive conversations, ask specific questions about your condition or care and cover everything you need
- Take time to prepare and write down key points you want to discuss with your doctor or nurse at your remote consultation. Use specific examples where possible, to provide context
- Some people find it helpful to talk through what they plan to discuss with family, friends and carers before an appointment



- If you are using a video call tool rather than the phone for your remote appointment, make sure to familiarise yourself with the video software beforehand. You could try it with a friend or family member and make sure everything is working so that your appointment runs smoothly. If you require assistance to set up these tools, ask family, friends or carers to help.



## During your remote appointment



- Take your time – try not to feel rushed. Stay relaxed so you remember the key points you wanted to discuss. Referring to your notes should help with this.
- Be honest – do not wait to be asked about a symptom or a concern. Tell the doctor or nurse what is on your mind. Give as much information as you can by referring to your list if you have prepared one.
- Be open – tell your doctor or nurse about how you are feeling and your overall wellbeing. Try to be specific about what is affecting you.
- Write things down – particularly if you do not have time to discuss everything you wanted to raise. If you have someone with you, ask them to write notes for you.
- Agree on next steps – discuss and set up a plan of action with your doctor
- Agree your next appointment date – find out when your next appointment will be (whether in-person or remote), and what you need to do before then
- Ask questions – do not be afraid to ask questions if there is anything you do not understand. It is important to be completely clear about your treatment.
- Keep a record – make sure that you obtain a copy of any relevant documents during your discussion, as you may need to refer to them later



## After your remote appointment

Hopefully you will have left your last appointment with a plan of action. Here are some suggestions to help you reflect and remember the key points you discussed and agreed with your doctor:

- **Reflecting on your appointment –** if you took notes during your appointment, it is worth re-reading them now to check if there is anything missing and / or if they make sense. Did you get answers to all your questions?
- **Updating your family, friends or carer –** you might find it useful to tell your family, friends or carer about the outcomes of your appointment. This will ensure that they are fully informed about your treatment and are able to support you with your agreed next steps
- **Follow up appointments –** while it is still fresh in your mind, it might help to think about what went well and what you would like to do differently at future appointments. What questions would you have liked to ask? Make sure you make a note of these questions so that you have an opportunity to ask them at your next appointment



Please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about anything you are unsure of. Tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about any side effects you are experiencing, even if they are not listed in the Patient Information Leaflet or in this booklet.



## GETTING SUPPORT

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There are a number of Irish organizations which provide invaluable help, information and support to people affected by atrial fibrillation and stroke.

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

### Irish Heart Foundation

17-19 Rathmines Road Lower  
Dublin 6. D06 C780

Telephone: +353 1 6685001

Website: [www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie)

Email: [info@irishheart.ie](mailto:info@irishheart.ie)

### Croí (Heart and Stroke Centre)

Croí House, Moyola Lane,  
Newcastle, Galway. H91 FF68

Telephone: + 353 91 544310

Website: [www.croi.ie](http://www.croi.ie)

Email: [info@croi.ie](mailto:info@croi.ie)

The Irish Heart Foundation provides invaluable help, information and support to people affected by atrial fibrillation, stroke and other heart conditions.

### Thrombosis Ireland

Unit 4 Terenure Enterprise Centre  
17 Rathfarnham Road,  
Dublin 6W, D6W YW11

Telephone: +353 87 3634828

Website: [www.thrombosis.ie](http://www.thrombosis.ie)

Email: [info@thrombosisireland.ie](mailto:info@thrombosisireland.ie)





# Notes

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# Your medical appointments

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