

# I am Taking Pradaxa (dabigatran)



Pradaxa is a new blood thinner that is prescribed for people with specific medical conditions that put them at risk of developing blood clots and having a stroke. Pradaxa inhibits the formation of blood clots and reduces your risk of having a stroke.

## How does it work?

- Pradaxa (dabigatran) slows your body's ability to form blood clots. Although clotting is a normal bodily function, blood clots can form in the heart, legs, or lungs in some people and may lead to complications such as stroke.

## Why am I being prescribed this medication?

- Pradaxa is used to reduce the risk of stroke in people that have non-valvular atrial fibrillation, or A Fib.
  - A Fib is a common type of irregular heartbeat, affecting over 2 million people in the US alone.
  - With A Fib, blood can stay in the heart and cause a blood clot. If the clot breaks off and travels to the brain, it can cause a stroke.
- Pradaxa can also be used to treat and prevent blood clots in the legs and lungs called deep venous thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE).

## How do I take it?

- For non-valvular A Fib, take one Pradaxa 150 mg capsule by mouth twice a day. Take with a full glass of water, with or without food. Swallow Pradaxa capsules whole. Do not break, chew, or empty the pellets from the capsule.
  - Based on your kidney function, a different dose may be recommended.
- For DVT or PE, take one Pradaxa 150 mg capsule by mouth twice daily **after** 5 to 10 days of an injectable blood thinner, such as Lovenox, **or after** completing 21 days of Xarelto tablets.
  - **Do NOT start Pradaxa until you have finished all your Lovenox injections or your Xarelto tablets.**
- **Even ONE missed dose can increase the risk of forming a blood clot and having a stroke.**
  - If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. However, if it is less than 6 hours before your next dose is due, skip the missed dose and take your next dose as usual. Never take 2 doses together to make up for a missed dose.
- **You should NOT stop your Pradaxa on your own.**
  - Your health care provider will advise you when it is appropriate to start or stop Pradaxa.

## What do I need to do if I am scheduled for a procedure or surgery?

- ALWAYS tell your health care provider that you are taking a blood thinner medicine.
- Tell your health care provider about the procedure or surgery as soon as it is scheduled. You will receive specific instructions based on the risk of bleeding associated with the procedure or surgery.

# I am Taking Pradaxa (continued)

## How do I store it?

- Store Pradaxa in the original bottle as it is sensitive to moisture.
  - **Do not place in pill boxes or other containers.**
- Once the original bottle is opened, it is only good for 4 months. Do not open multiple bottles at one time.

## What are the common side effects?

- Increased risk of bleeding
  - Minor bleeds such as nose bleeds and bruises are common and should stop on their own.
  - Other signs of bleeding such as blood in the urine, red, black, or tarry stools, or bleeding that lasts longer than **20 minutes** with applied pressure need to be reported to your health care provider immediately.
- Upset stomach such as nausea, heartburn, or indigestion
  - Taking Pradaxa with a full glass of water and/or food may help to minimize stomach upset.

## What food or drug interactions are there?

- Food does not affect the way Pradaxa works. You may take it with or without food.
- Avoid alcohol as it increases your risk for ulcers and stomach bleeds.
- Medications to avoid include aspirin-related products and NSAIDs (ibuprofen, naproxen, meloxicam, etc.).
- Tell your health care provider about all the medicines you take, including herbal supplements, over the counter medicines, and vitamins.

## How is it monitored?

- Pradaxa does not require frequent lab monitoring but it is important to check your complete blood count (CBC), kidney, and liver function when you start the medication. Your kidney function needs to be checked at least every year because Pradaxa is cleared from the body by the kidneys.

## Is there a medicine that can reverse the effects of Pradaxa?

- Praxbind (idarucizumab) is an intravenous medication approved for reversing Pradaxa for life-threatening bleeds and emergency surgery.