

Anticoagulation (Blood Thinner) Management
Patient & Family Medication Education
Dabigatran (Pradaxa®)

Dabigatran (Pradaxa®) is used to prevent blood clots from forming in your body. It is sometimes called a blood thinner. It is used to:

- lower the risk of stroke and blood clots in atrial fibrillation;
- treat blood clots in the veins of legs (deep vein thrombosis or DVT) or lungs (pulmonary embolism or PE) and reduce the risk of them happening again;
- help prevent blood clots following hip replacement surgery

Do NOT STOP TAKING this medicine without talking to the doctor who prescribes it or your pharmacist at the anticoagulation clinic.
This drug is NOT for use in people with artificial heart valves.

HOW and WHEN to take dabigatran (Pradaxa®)

- **Follow the instructions provided by your pharmacist at the anticoagulation clinic.**
- Take your dose every morning and every night at the same time
- It may be taken with or without food.
- Swallow pills whole. Do NOT crush, break or chew pills.
- This medicine is available in different pill sizes and shapes. Be sure you know your pill size, shape, and dose instructions.

Be sure your prescription is refilled on time and you do not miss a dose, because this can increase your risk of having a blood clot.

- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember only *if* your next dose is due MORE than 6 hours away. If your next dose is LESS than 6 hours away,

tell the anticoagulation clinic immediately. Do **NOT** take two pills at same time.

- If you take too much dabigatran (Pradaxa®), go to the nearest emergency room or call the anticoagulation clinic immediately. Taking too much anticoagulation medication may cause more bleeding.
- If you need surgery for a dental or medical procedure (especially if you are scheduled for a spinal or an epidural), talk to the anticoagulation clinic. You may need to stop this medicine for a short period of time.

Normal SIDE EFFECTS of Dabigatran (Pradaxa®)

- This medicine may cause bleeding. Stay away from activities that may increase the risk of bleeding or injury.
- Bleeding from cuts may take longer to stop. Bruising may happen more easily. This is normal.
- Other common side effects may include: stomach pain, indigestion, upset stomach, heart burn or an allergic reaction (such as chest pain or tightness, swelling in your face or tongue, trouble breathing, or feeling faint). Tell your doctor or the anticoagulation clinic about any side effects that bother you.

Danger Signs **CALL THE ANTICOAGULATION CLINIC or get emergency medical help by dialing 911 if you have:**

- Symptoms of an allergic reaction such as chest pain or tightness, swelling in your face or tongue, trouble breathing, or feeling faint
- Blood coming from your mouth, nose or gums
- Blood or blood clots in your sputum (spit) after coughing
- For females, bleeding from your vagina or menstrual flow heavier than normal
- Vomit blood or vomit looks like “coffee grounds”
- Red or black (tarry) stool

- Pink or dark brown urine
- Bruising that is worse than usual or happens for no reason at all
- Unusual headache or difficulty in thinking or speaking
- Any weakness or numbness on your face, arms or legs
- Unexpected pain and/or swelling (headache or joint pain for example)
- A bad fall or injury, especially if you hit your head

IMPORTANT things to know when taking dabigatran (Pradaxa®)

- Tell all your doctors, dentists, and other health care providers that you take dabigatran (Pradaxa®).
- Kidney problems can change the effectiveness of this drug. Tell the doctor or the anticoagulation clinic prescribing dabigatran (Pradaxa®) if you were told you have these problems. Blood tests may be needed from time to time to check this.
- When filling any new prescriptions, or taking over-the-counter medicines or herbal products ask your pharmacist to make sure that it is safe to take them with dabigatran (Pradaxa®).
- Some medicines may affect the way dabigatran (Pradaxa®) works. [examples: ketoconazole (*Nizoral*□), dronedarone (*Multaq*®), rifampin (*Rifater*®, *Rifamate*®, *Rimactane*®, *Rifadin*®), proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) (*Omeprazole*®, *Pantoprazole*®)]
- Some medicines taken with dabigatran (Pradaxa®) may increase your risk of bleeding. [examples: aspirin, NSAIDs (*Motrin*®, *Advil*®), *Naprosyn*®), heparins, warfarin (*Coumadin*®), clopidogrel bisulfate (*Plavix*®), prasugrel (*Effient*®)]
- Keep a list of all your medicines, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines and herbal products, to share with your doctors and other health care providers.

Dabigatran (Pradaxa®) and PREGNANCY/BREAST-FEEDING

- There are not enough studies to inform us if it is safe to take during pregnancy.
- It is very important to tell your doctor or the anticoagulation clinic if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- It is not known if this medicine is passed through breast milk. It is recommended to stop this medicine or stop breast-feeding. **Before stopping this medicine, talk with your doctor or the anticoagulation clinic.**

STORING dabigatran (Pradaxa®)

- Store at room temperature between 59°F to 86°F (15°C to 30°C).
- **Once a new bottle is opened, the pills must be used within 120 days. Write the date on the bottle when you open it. Ask your pharmacist how to safely dispose of old pills.**
- **Keep pills stored in the original container. Do NOT use a different pill box.**
- Keep out of the reach of children.