

Your guide to **Stroke** **Prevention** and **Atrial** **Fibrillation**



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 the Yellow Card Scheme at www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard or search for MHRA Yellow Card in Google Play or Apple App Store.

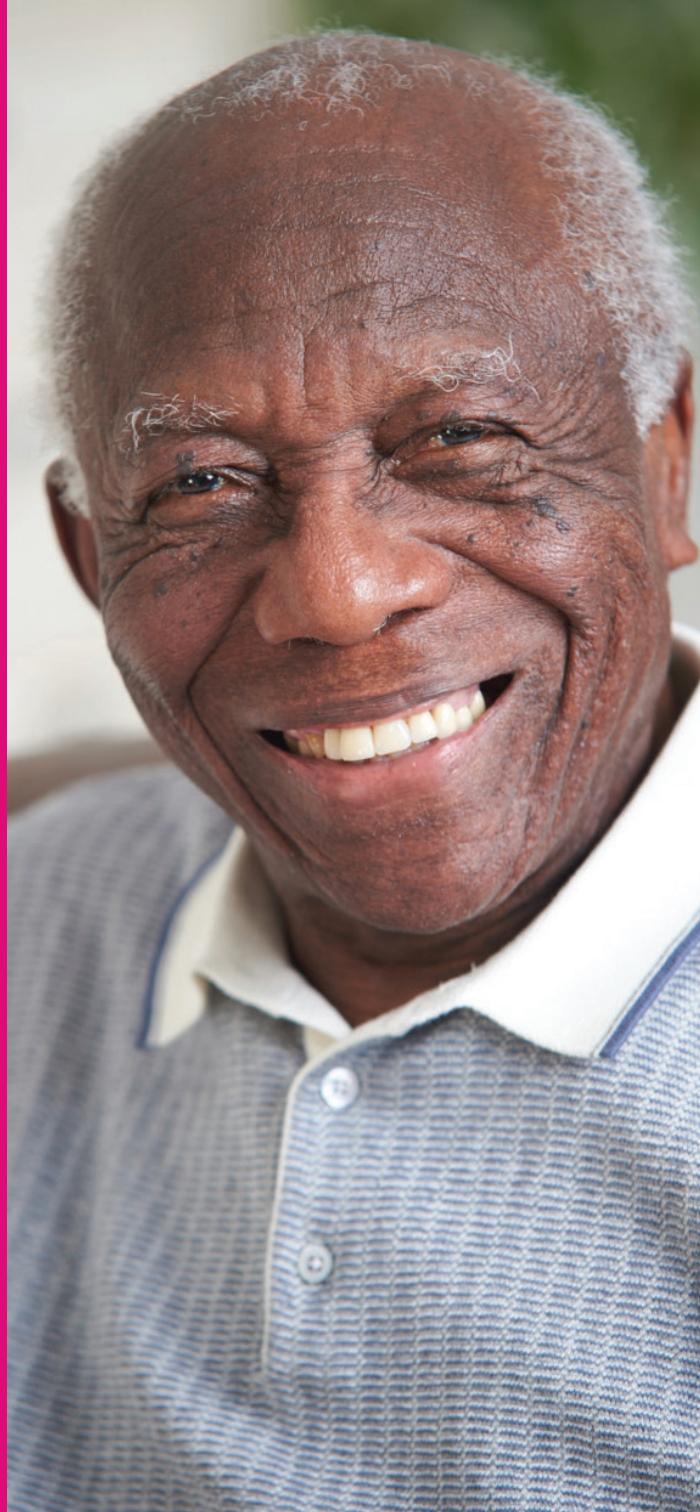
By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

If You Want to Report a Quality Complaint

Please report any quality complaints to Bayer Plc Email: qualitycomplaints@bayer.com



This booklet was created and funded by Bayer, and is intended only for adult patients who have been prescribed Xarelto



Starting your treatment journey with Xarelto (rivaroxaban)



You have been diagnosed with non-valvular atrial fibrillation (NVAf) and have been prescribed Xarelto for stroke prevention.¹

We understand that you may have many questions about this. This leaflet is designed to help you on that journey, and to give you the answers to the following questions:

- What is Atrial Fibrillation (AF)?
- What are the causes of AF?
- Why am I more likely to have a stroke?
- What is Xarelto and how does it work?
- How do I take Xarelto; what is the dosage and when should I take it?

Xarelto top tips

- Take Xarelto at the same time everyday, so that you build it into your daily routine¹
- Always carry your **Patient Alert Card** in case of an emergency²

Please ask your doctor if you haven't been provided with a Patient Alert Card. If you are new to Xarelto, the usual dose for AF is one **20mg tablet once a day**.¹

For patients with reduced kidney function, dosing is one **15mg tablet once a day**.¹



Xarelto is used to treat different patients for different reasons. Another person prescribed Xarelto may take a different dose from you. Always take Xarelto exactly as your doctor has told you and check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure.

Never adjust the dose of Xarelto by yourself. Your doctor will adjust the dose if necessary.



What is AF and what is a stroke?

AF is a heart condition - more specifically, it is a type of irregular heartbeat. AF can cause blood clots to form which makes you more likely to have a stroke.²

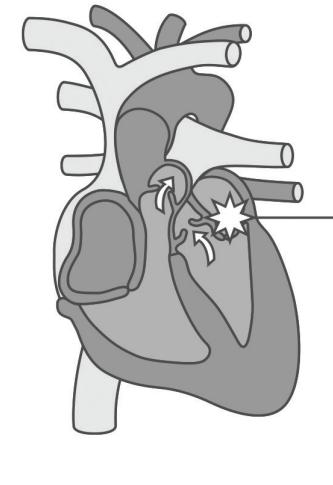
A stroke happens when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off. This could be due to a blockage in an artery (ischaemic stroke) or by bleeding in the brain (haemorrhagic stroke). A transient ischemic attack (TIA) or mini stroke is similar to a stroke, but the symptoms are temporary.²

More than 1 million people in the UK are living with AF, and it is more common as we get older²

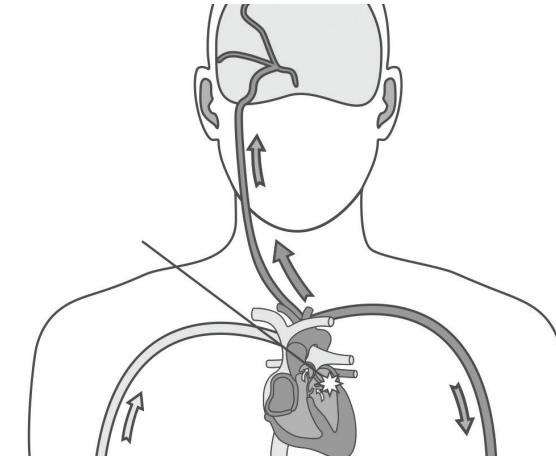


Currently less than half of UK patients with known AF are on anticoagulant medication when they go to hospital with a stroke²

How are AF and stroke related?



Blood clot forms in the heart



A stroke is caused when a blood clot travels and becomes lodged in the brain, blocking part of the blood supply

If you have AF, your heart has episodes where it beats faster and in an irregular way. If you have a fast or irregular heartbeat, your heart may not have a chance to empty itself of blood properly before filling up again. As the blood does not move quickly and smoothly, clots can form. If these blood clots then travel in the blood stream to the brain, they could block the blood flow to part of your brain and cause a stroke or TIA.²

What are the causes of AF?

AF is most commonly caused by heart conditions. However, many people with AF have no known heart problems.² Common causes include:²

- Age – the older you become, the more likely you are to develop AF
- Problems with the heart's structure
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease (coronary artery disease)
- Certain medications, caffeine, tobacco, or alcohol
- Pneumonia or problems with the lungs
- Metabolic problems, such as an overactive thyroid
- Sleep apnoea



What is my risk of having a stroke?

As you have been diagnosed with AF, your doctor will assess your personal risk of stroke. One method your doctor may use is the CHA₂DS₂-VASc scoring system below:²

CHA ₂ DS ₂ -VASc and how it is calculated		
C	Congestive cardiac failure	1 point
H	Hypertension	1 point
A ₂	Age greater than 75 years	2 points
D	Diabetes	1 point
S ₂	Stroke or TIA/Thromboembolism	2 points
V	Vascular disease	1 point
A	Age 65-74	1 point
Sc	Sex (female=1, male=0)	1 point

The CHA₂DS₂-VASc scoring system is used to assess whether anticoagulation medicine is required. Anticoagulation medicine slows down your body's ability to clot, therefore reducing the likelihood of clots forming), is required. Treatment is usually recommended when your score is two or more, however in some instances treatment may even be recommended with a score of below two. Your doctor, in consultation with you, will decide your personalised treatment plan depending on your personal risk of stroke and bleeding.²

Why have I been prescribed Xarelto?

You have been diagnosed with non-valvular AF, which means that your heart beats irregularly and this gives you an increased risk of developing a blood clot. Non-valvular AF is a type of irregular heart beat that is not caused by a heart valve problem. You have been prescribed Xarelto to help prevent these clots forming and travelling to the brain, which could potentially cause a disabling stroke.^{1,2}



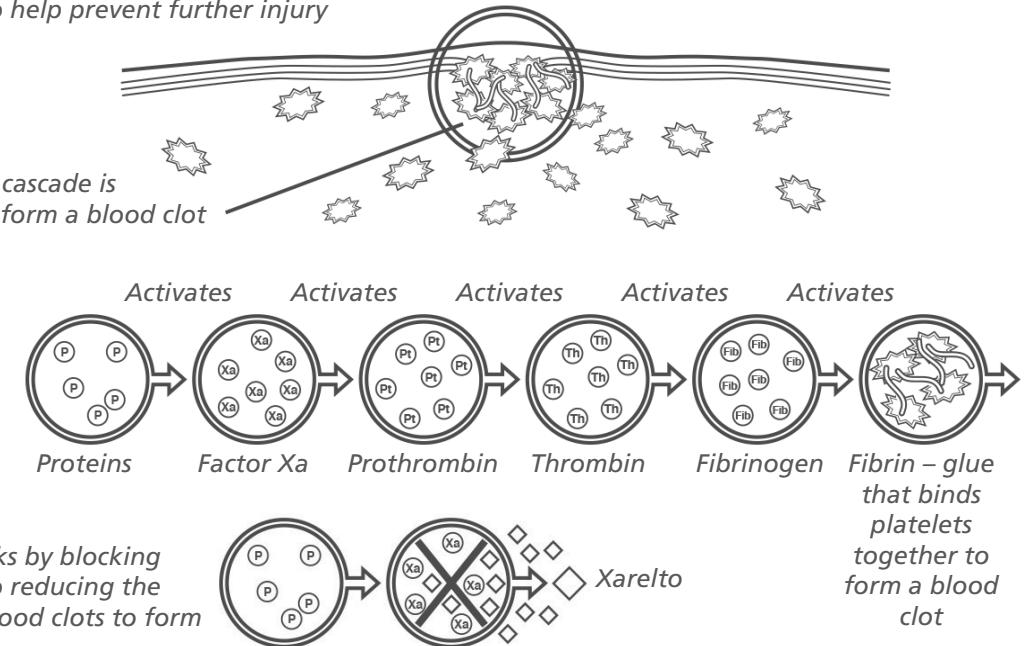
Xarelto will not treat the underlying cause of your AF. You should continue to take your current medication used to manage your AF, as prescribed by your doctor.

What is Xarelto and how does it work?

Xarelto is an anticoagulant, which is a type of medication that slows down your body's ability to clot. This reduces the likelihood of dangerous blood clots forming.¹

When the lining of the blood vessel becomes damaged, platelets are activated at the site to help prevent further injury

The clotting cascade is activated to form a blood clot



Xarelto works by blocking Factor Xa, so reducing the ability for blood clots to form

How do I take Xarelto?



- Xarelto is taken by **mouth** (orally), and the tablet should be swallowed whole, preferably with water, and must be taken together with a meal. If you are new to Xarelto, the usual dose for AF is **one 20mg tablet once a day**.¹
- If you have difficulty swallowing tablets whole, talk to your doctor about other ways to take Xarelto. The tablet may be crushed and mixed with water or apple purée immediately before use.¹
- For patients with reduced kidney function, dosing is **one 15mg tablet once a day**, which must be taken together with a meal.¹
- Take the tablet every day until your doctor tells you to stop. Your doctor will decide how long you must continue treatment.¹

Common questions

What do I do if I miss a dose of Xarelto?

If you are taking one 20mg tablet or one 15mg tablet once a day and have missed a dose, take it as soon as you remember. **Do not take more than one tablet in a single day to make up for a forgotten dose.** Take the next tablet on the following day and then carry on taking one tablet once a day.¹

What do I do if I take too much Xarelto?

If you have taken too many Xarelto tablets, contact your doctor immediately as taking too many may increase your risk of bleeding.¹

How long will I be treated with Xarelto?

The length of treatment with Xarelto is based on an individual assessment of your risk factors and the benefits of long term preventative treatment. Your doctor will discuss this with you and together agree the most appropriate length of treatment.

Do not stop taking Xarelto without talking to your doctor first, because Xarelto treats and prevents serious conditions.¹

Common questions

What are the most common side effects of Xarelto?

Like all medicines, Xarelto can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.¹

Like other similar medicines (antithrombotic agents), Xarelto may cause bleeding which may potentially be life threatening. Excessive bleeding may lead to a sudden drop in blood pressure (shock). In some cases the bleeding may not be obvious.¹

Tell your doctor immediately if you experience any of the following side effects:¹

- *long or excessive bleeding*
- *exceptional weakness, tiredness, paleness, dizziness, headache*
- *unexplained swelling, breathlessness, or chest pain (angina pectoris)*
- *severe skin reaction and severe allergic reaction*
- *bleeding into the brain or inside the skull*
- *severe skin reaction and severe allergic reaction*
- *bleeding into the brain or inside the skull (symptoms can include headache, one-sided weakness, vomiting, seizures, decreased level of consciousness, and neck stiffness. This is a serious medical emergency. Seek medical attention immediately!)*



If you have any symptoms of bleeding, tell your doctor or seek medical advice so you can be monitored and have your treatment assessed.¹

For a full list of possible side effects, please refer to the Patient Information Leaflet provided inside your Xarelto tablet box. If you think you are experiencing side effects from Xarelto at any time, contact your doctor or pharmacist for advice.¹



Common questions

Will I be monitored during treatment with Xarelto?

No routine blood test monitoring coagulation is required when treated with Xarelto. However, it is important that you attend regular follow-up visits with your doctor to assess and manage your condition and monitor your treatment with Xarelto.¹

Can I take other medications with Xarelto?

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are also taking other medications, even medicines obtained without a prescription (e.g. herbal remedies, vitamins, over-the-counter medicines).¹

Will I bleed more if I have a cut whilst taking Xarelto?

As Xarelto slows down your body's ability to clot, bleeding is a common side effect. However, if you experience long or excessive bleeding, tell your doctor immediately.¹

Do I need to avoid certain types of food when using Xarelto?

No. Xarelto must be taken with food and has no known food interactions.¹

What happens if I need to have dental treatment or an operation whilst I am taking Xarelto?

As Xarelto may increase your risk of bleeding it is important that you tell your dentist or doctor that you are taking Xarelto before any dental treatment or operations. If your operation involves a catheter or injection into your spinal column (e.g. for epidural or spinal anaesthesia or pain reduction), tell your doctor immediately if you get numbness or weakness of your legs or problems with your bowel or bladder after the end of anaesthesia, because urgent care is necessary. A **Patient Alert Card** should be provided to you along with this leaflet which you should carry with you at all times and show in advance of any dental treatments/operations to ensure you are treated appropriately.^{1,2} Please ask your doctor if you haven't been provided with a Patient Alert Card.

Can I drink alcohol whilst taking Xarelto?

Xarelto is not known to interact with alcohol. However, you should always drink in moderation and stay within the recommended guidelines.¹

Can I take Xarelto if I am intolerant to some sugars?

Xarelto contains lactose and you should speak to your doctor if you have a known intolerance to some sugars before taking it.¹

What should I do if I spit up the dose or vomit after taking Xarelto?

If this happens less than 30 minutes after you have taken Xarelto, take a new dose. However, if you spit up the dose or vomit more than 30 minutes after you have taken Xarelto, **do not** take a new dose. In this case, take the next Xarelto dose at the usual time. Contact your doctor if you repeatedly spit up the dose or vomit after taking Xarelto.¹

Common questions

Can I drive or operate machinery whilst taking Xarelto?

Xarelto may cause fainting or dizziness. If you experience these symptoms you should not drive, ride a bicycle or use machinery.¹

Can I take Xarelto if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

It is important that you discuss this with your doctor as you must not take Xarelto if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. If there is a chance that you could become pregnant, it is essential that you use a reliable contraceptive while you are taking Xarelto. If you become pregnant while you are using Xarelto, inform your doctor immediately, who will discuss your treatment options moving forwards.¹



When should I not take Xarelto?

You must not take Xarelto:¹

- if you are allergic (hypersensitive) to Xarelto or any of the other ingredients of Xarelto
- if you are bleeding excessively or are at risk of major bleeding
- if you have a liver disease which leads to an increased risk of bleeding
- if you have a disease or condition in an organ of the body that increases the risk of serious bleeding (e.g. stomach ulcer, injury or bleeding in the brain, recent surgery of the brain or eyes)
- if you are taking any other anticoagulant medicine to prevent blood clotting
- if you are pregnant or breastfeeding

Speak to your doctor if any of these apply to you.

How should I store Xarelto?

Xarelto does not have any special storage conditions, however, keep it out of the reach and sight of children and do not use Xarelto after the expiry date (which is provided on the pack).¹

If you still have questions about the use of Xarelto, please ask your doctor or pharmacist who will be able to answer them and provide you with more information, as appropriate.

For a full list of possible side effects please see the Patient Information Leaflet inside your Xarelto tablet box.¹

Take special care with Xarelto:¹

You must not take Xarelto:¹

- if you have an increased risk of bleeding, as could be the case in situations such as:
- severe kidney disease for adults, since your kidney function may affect the amount of medicine that works in your body
- if you are taking other medicines to prevent blood clotting (e.g. warfarin, dabigatran, apixaban or heparin), when changing anticoagulant treatment or while getting heparin through a venous or arterial line to keep it open
- bleeding disorders
- very high blood pressure, not controlled by medical treatment
- diseases of your stomach or bowel that might result in bleeding
- a problem with the blood vessels in the back of your eyes
- a lung disease where your bronchi are widened and filled with pus, or previous bleeding from your lung
- if you have a prosthetic heart valve
- if you know that you have a disease called antiphospholipid syndrome (a disorder of the immune system that causes an increased risk of blood clots)
- if your doctor determines that your blood pressure is unstable or another treatment or surgical procedure to remove the blood clot from your lungs is planned

Tell your doctor if you know you have any of these conditions, so a decision can be made as to whether the treatment may need to be changed.



Please remember to take Xarelto every day.¹

For further information please read the Patient Information Leaflet inside your Xarelto tablet box or visit www.xarelto.co.uk



Carry your Xarelto Patient Alert Card at all times²

Along with this booklet, you should have received a Patient Alert Card. If you have not, then please speak to your doctor or pharmacist to request one.²

You will need to fill in all of your details on the **Patient Alert Card**, and then put it in your wallet/purse. In the unlikely event of an emergency, a doctor treating you will need to be made aware of the existing medications you are on so that you can be cared for appropriately. In addition, please show your card in advance of any dental treatment/operations.²

Personal information

Emergency contact: _____

Name of consultant / hospital: _____

GP name and address: _____

List of your current medication

Useful contacts



Arrhythmia Alliance (AA)

Tel: 01789 867 501

Email: info@heartrhythmalliance.org

Website: www.heartrhythmalliance.org

Atrial Fibrillation Association (AFA)

Tel: 01789 867 502

Email: info@atrial-fibrillation.org.uk

Website: www.heartrhythmalliance.org/afa/uk

British Heart Foundation (BHF)

Tel: 0300 330 3311

Website: www.bhf.org.uk

The Stroke Association

Tel: 0303 303 3100

Email: helpline@stroke.org.uk

Website: www.stroke.org.uk

My notes

Use this space to make any notes related to your treatment,
for example, questions for your doctor

You are at the heart of everything we do...



References:

1. Xarelto Patient Information Leaflet
2. Stroke Association, available at <https://www.stroke.org.uk/professionals/atrial-fibrillation-information-and-resources>. Accessed December 2022

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 the Yellow Card Scheme at www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard or search for MHRA Yellow Card in Google Play or Apple App Store.

By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

If you want to report a quality complaint, please contact qualitycomplaints@bayer.com

Please note that none of the people shown in photos in this booklet are real patients

