

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

# ELIQUIS<sup>®</sup> (apixaban) for patients with non valvular atrial fibrillation



## Patient Information Booklet

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



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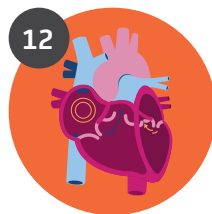


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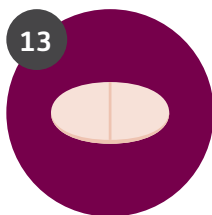


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# Introduction

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If you are reading this booklet, you have been told by your doctor that you have a heart condition called non valvular atrial fibrillation (or AF, for short). Your doctor has prescribed ELIQUIS<sup>®</sup> (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 AF to help reduce the risk of a stroke.

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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.

Remember, you have a team of dedicated healthcare professionals trained to help you with your condition and treatment, and to offer support.

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.



# About atrial fibrillation (AF)

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## **What is AF?**

AF is a heart condition that causes an irregular, and often unusually rapid, heart rate.

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## How does it feel to have AF?


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Many people with AF do not experience any symptoms. Those who do have symptoms may feel:

- Tired or exhausted
- Short of breath
- Palpitations (an uncomfortable feeling that the heart is racing)
- Chest pain
- Weakness
- Faint, dizzy or lightheaded
- Less able to exercise

You should be aware that these symptoms are also commonly associated with other conditions, such as anxiety, and may/may not be a sign of AF.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, it is very important that you visit your doctor to seek advice.

 **If you are having chest pain, please visit your doctor immediately as it may be a medical emergency.**

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## How does AF happen?

Your heart is a muscle with four chambers – two upper (the atria) and two lower chambers (ventricles). The atria send electrical signals that cause your heart to beat. The ventricles pump blood to your lungs and around your body.

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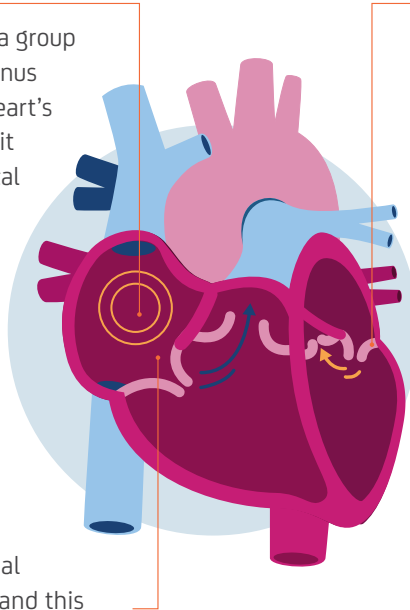


## THE ATRIA

Within your atria is a group of cells called the sinus node. This is your heart's natural pacemaker, it sends small electrical signals which cause the heart to contract at even and consistent intervals, and trigger your heartbeats.

## IF YOU HAVE AF

In AF, these electrical signals are chaotic and this disturbs your heart's natural rhythm. As a result, the atria do not contract properly, and your heart cannot pump blood as efficiently as usual.



## BLOOD CLOT

Because blood is not being pumped efficiently, this can sometimes cause blood to pool in the atria and form a thick blob (blood clot).

If this occurs and a clot, or bits of a clot, break loose, they can travel through the bloodstream. If a clot blocks blood flow to the brain, it may cause a stroke – this is why your doctor may prescribe treatment, to reduce this risk.

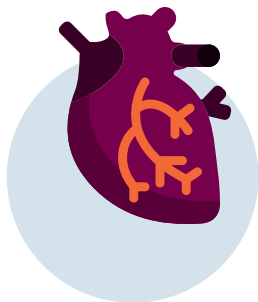
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## What are the complications of AF?

AF itself is not usually life-threatening – however, it can increase your chance of having a stroke by up to five times.

A stroke is a serious medical emergency and needs urgent hospitalisation and treatment. **If you have a stroke, the sooner you receive treatment for it, the less damage it is likely to cause.**

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Here are some of the most common signs (what someone else notices in you) and symptoms (what you actually feel) of a stroke:

- Your **face, mouth or eye may drop on one side**, or you may not be able to smile
- You may feel **weakness or numbness on one side** of your body, making it difficult to lift and keep both arms up
- Your **speech may become slurred** or you may not be able to talk at all
- You **may not understand what others are saying** to you

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*With stroke, time is critical – if you, or those around you, notice any of the signs or symptoms here – please seek immediate medical attention!*

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Although anyone, at any age, can have a stroke, your risk of having one will increase if (among others):

- you are older than 55
- you have certain medical conditions, i.e.:
  - **AF**
  - high blood pressure
  - diabetes
  - high cholesterol
- you smoke
- you drink too much alcohol
- you are overweight
- you have an unhealthy diet
- someone in your family had a stroke

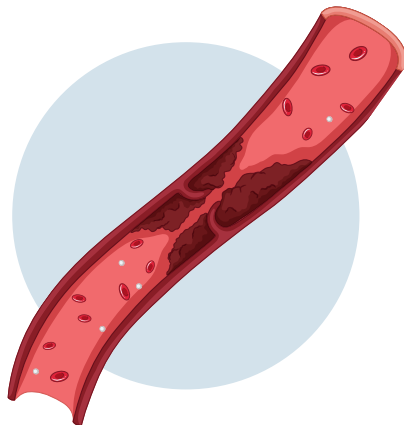
# How can I reduce my risk of AF-related stroke?

As described before, a stroke may occur when a clot, or bits of a clot, break loose from your heart and travel through the bloodstream towards the brain, blocking blood flow to your brain. Blood carries oxygen – and, if your brain does not receive enough blood because of this blockage, you may have a stroke.

Your doctor has prescribed you ELIQUIS® (apixaban), which is a type of medicine known as an ‘anticoagulant’, to reduce your risk of a stroke. Anticoagulants make it harder for blood clots to form, which may help reduce your risk of a stroke.

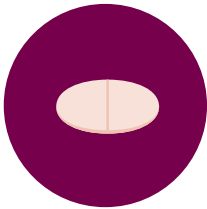
There are several different types of anticoagulants that can be taken at different times and in different ways (for example, tablets or injections).

You and your doctor may have discussed the different options of anticoagulants. Healthcare teams provide specific guidance for each treatment and, in addition, there is an information leaflet inside the medication pack as a useful reminder.



# About ELIQUIS® (apixaban)

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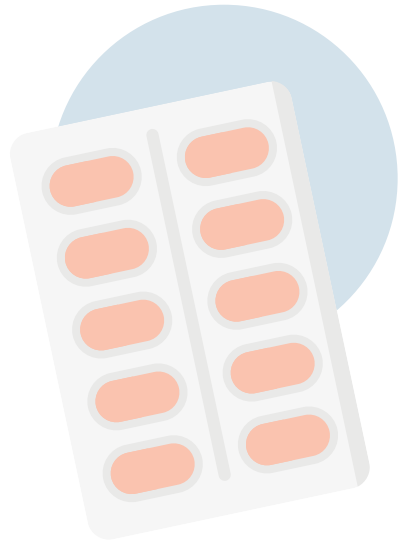
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## What is ELIQUIS?

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ELIQUIS is an anticoagulant that contains the active ingredient apixaban. ELIQUIS works by blocking one of the agents that causes blood clotting (known as factor Xa).

If your doctor has prescribed ELIQUIS, it is because they believe it is the most suitable medicine for you to help reduce your risk of having a stroke due to AF.



Tablets shown are not actual size.

## 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.

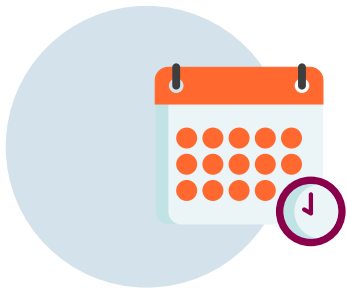
To help you remember, try to fit in taking your tablets with a normal routine that

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.





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### How long do I need to take ELIQUIS?

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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.

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*Do not stop taking ELIQUIS without discussing it with your doctor first!*

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

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

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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.**

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

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Take the medicine pack with you, or have it close by 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.

# Things to be aware of when taking ELIQUIS®

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- Inform your doctor and dentist 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 (such as aspirin), 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 other medicines to prevent blood clotting



**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.

Take special care with Eliquis - 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), tell your doctor who will decide if the treatment may need to be changed.

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

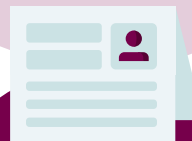


**Important information inside your pack of ELIQUIS® (apixaban)**

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. You can put it in your wallet, for example.

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 of ELIQUIS<sup>®</sup>

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.



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

## 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
- nausea (feeling sick)
- blood tests may show an increase in gamma-glutamyltransferase (GGT) or alanine aminotransferase (ALT)

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 HPRC 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)**

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*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.*

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# Healthy living with AF

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**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.**



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## Diet

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Although there are no dietary restrictions with ELIQUIS<sup>®</sup>, a healthy diet can help with other risk factors that contribute to AF.

For example, eating plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, while avoiding high amounts of fatty meats and processed foods, can help control your cholesterol levels.

Lowering your salt intake can also help control high blood pressure, another health condition that contributes to AF.



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## Exercise

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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, so your doctor can decide if it is suitable for you.

# 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.irisheart.ie](http://www.irisheart.ie)  
Email: [info@irisheart.ie](mailto:info@irisheart.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)



# Questions to consider asking your doctor

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**01.** I am worried about obtaining further supplies of my medication – what should I do?

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01

**02.** Does it matter that I am taking other medications?

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02

**03.** Can I still exercise? If yes, which exercises are suitable for me?

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03

**04.** If I think I am developing coronavirus symptoms – what should I do?

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**05.** Will I have to have a consultation in person?

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**06.** What if I have more questions – who should I ask?

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**07.** I am feeling isolated – are other sources of support or advice available to me?

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07









Date	Time	With



# Notes

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