



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Preventing Blood Clots with Apixaban while on Treatment for Multiple Myeloma

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

Haematology Nurses in York Hospital on 01904 725815

Or Scarborough hospital on 01723 342976

Between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday

All other times call Haematology and Oncology Inpatient  
Unit (ward 31) on 01904 726031

## **Why have I been given this leaflet?**

You have been given this leaflet as you have been diagnosed with multiple myeloma and have been prescribed thalidomide, lenalidomide or pomalidomide, to treat it.

A combination of myeloma and taking these medicines increases your risk of developing a blood clot. Two of the most serious kinds of blood clots are a pulmonary embolism (PE) that develops in the lungs or a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) that develops in the legs. This leaflet will explain to you how the risk can be minimised.

## **Symptoms of a blood clot to look out for**

Please inform your doctor or nurse immediately if you notice any symptoms such as:

- shortness of breath and cough
- chest pain
- blood-stained phlegm
- swelling in an arm or leg
- fast heart rate, racing pulse or palpitations
- any episode of collapse, for example, losing consciousness or fainting

## **Clot prevention with apixaban**

Your haematology consultant intends to or has already started you on apixaban. This is an oral anticoagulant tablet which will help prevent blood clots.

If you are already on apixaban or taking any of the following blood thinners, you should inform your consultant immediately:

- Aspirin, clopidogrel, prasugrel or ticagrelor.
- Enoxaparin, dalteparin, or tinzaparin.
- Dabigatran, edoxaban or rivaroxaban.

The use of apixaban as a clot prevention for people undergoing chemotherapy is not currently licensed by the drug company. Your consultant recommends taking apixaban because evidence shows it is effective in preventing blood clots.

If you require more information, please ask your consultant, haematology nurse or pharmacist for the unlicensed medicines leaflet (document reference PIL576).

## **How to take apixaban**

The usual dose is one 2.5 mg tablet twice a day, one in the morning and one in the evening. The tablet should be swallowed with a drink of water, with or without food. Tablets should be taken at the same times every day to have the best effect.

If you struggle to swallow the tablets, you may crush them and take them with water or apple juice.

You should continue taking apixaban tablets every day as long as you are on chemotherapy treatment or until advised to stop by your doctor.

If you forget to take the tablet, take it as soon as you remember and then continue as usual. If you remember when it is almost time to take the next dose, only take one tablet – do not double the dose.

If you have taken more tablets than advised, inform your GP or haematology nurse immediately.

## **Possible side effects**

As with any medication, apixaban can cause side effects. Some common ones include: bleeding and bruising, feeling sick (nausea), and anaemia (which may cause tiredness or paleness). For a full list of side effects please see the apixaban patient information leaflet given to you with the tablets.

# When to seek urgent medical attention

You should seek medical attention urgently if you notice any of the following:

- Bleeding (from nose, heavier periods, blood in stools or urine, in spit when coughing, coffee grain like vomit).
- Unexplained bruising.
- Severe headache, nausea or any new problems with eyesight.
- Recent head injury.

If you are admitted to hospital or require any dental treatment, inform medical staff (doctor, nurse, dentist or pharmacist) that you are on a chemotherapy treatment and are also taking apixaban tablets.

Please always carry the Patient Alert Card (supplied in the box with apixaban tablets) with you and show it to medical staff if receiving treatment.

## **Other medicines and apixaban**

Taking other medicines with apixaban may increase or decrease its effects. It is important to inform your haematologist about all medication and vitamins or food supplements you take.

There is no interaction with alcohol but, be aware that drinking increases the risk of injuries and thus bruising and bleeding. Please stick to national guidelines and avoid binge drinking.

Speak to your pharmacist or doctor before starting any new medication or supplements.

Please speak to your haematology specialist nurse, doctors and pharmacists if further information is needed.

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:  
Simas Vaitkevicius, Haematology Pharmacist,  
[simas.vaitkevicius@nhs.net](mailto:simas.vaitkevicius@nhs.net)

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

[www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

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