



Arixtra[®] (fondaparinux)

A patient's guide



University Health Care
Thrombosis Service

What is Arixtra®?

Arixtra® is a shot that helps keep harmful blood clots from forming.

You may have a blood clot or be in danger of getting one. Blood clots can be harmful if they block blood vessels. You can get clots in your veins, arteries, heart valves, or heart. Arixtra® may be used if:

- You can't move around easily or very much
- You have knee replacement surgery
- You have hip replacement surgery
- You have a blood clot in the leg (deep vein thrombosis or DVT)
- You have a blood clot in the lungs (pulmonary embolism or PE)
- You have belly surgery

How should I use Arixtra®?

Arixtra® is a shot given once or twice a day. You should follow your doctor's exact instructions for how long to continue using Arixtra®.

The medicine will come in a syringe and is ready to use. There is an air bubble in the syringe. Do not try to get rid of this air bubble before giving the shot.

How do I give myself a shot?

1. Wash your hands.

2. Sit or lay down.

Get in a position where you can see and pinch skin on your stomach or legs.

3. Pick a place to give the shot.

Shots should be given in a place that has some fat, such as your stomach, thighs, or the back of your arm. Only use the back of your arms if someone else is giving you the shot.

4. Use a different place for each shot.

Make sure to change where you give the shot each time. If you use your stomach, stay 2 inches away from:

- Your belly button
- Any place you have had surgery
- Any place you have a scar
- Any place you have a tattoo

Think of your stomach as a clock. Give the first shot at 1, the next shot at 2, and so on. Do not give shots where the hands of the clock would be on 12 or 6. If you use your thighs, use one leg and then the other. Start at the top and work your way down, then start over.

5. Clean the area with alcohol.

Use a new alcohol wipe for each shot. Scrub the area several times and let the alcohol dry completely.

6. Remove the cap from the needle.

Hold the syringe in one hand and use the other hand to twist the needle guard counter-clockwise and then pull it straight off. Do not stand near anyone when you take off the cap.

7. Get ready to give the shot.

Hold the shot in the hand you write

with. Hold it like you would a pen. Be careful not to go near anyone with the needle.

8. Pinch the place where you are going to give the shot.

Use your other hand to pinch the fat in the area you just cleaned.

9. Give the shot.

Holding the needle straight against the pinched skin, push the needle all the way in. Then, push the plunger all the way in. Let go of the plunger and the needle will get covered by a safety shield. Let go of the pinched skin.

10. Throw the shot away.

Do not put the shot in the garbage. Put the shot in a container made for needles, (or in any hard, closed container a needle cannot poke through). Do not use a shot or needle more than once. When you are through getting shots, tape the container closed with duct tape and throw it away in your garbage.

Side effects:

You may get pain, redness, bruising, or swelling where the shot is given.

Bleeding

The most common side effect of blood thinning medication is bleeding.

Some bleeding is minor, like:

- Bleeding gums when brushing your teeth

- Small nose bleeds that stop right away
- Easy bruising
- Longer or heavier menstrual periods

Most of the time you do not need to see your health care provider for minor bleeding. If you are ever worried that your bleeding is serious or are concerned you should call your provider.

Some bleeding is major, like:

- Red or bloody urine
- Black, red, or tarry (look like tar) stools
- Throwing up or coughing up blood
- Severe headaches
- New pain or swelling

If you have major bleeding seek medical help right away.

Blood clots

It is still possible to get a blood clot while you are on blood thinners.

Symptoms of a blood clot are any of these things:

- New or sudden increase in warmth, pain, or swelling in your arms or legs
- Difficulty breathing or sudden increase in shortness of breath
- Chest pain, discomfort, or tightness
- Weakness, numbness, or tingling in your arms or legs

What should I do if I think I have given myself too much Arixtra® or if I miss a dose?

- Call your health care provider immediately even if you don't feel any different.
- If you forget to take your medication, take it as soon as you remember. Then call your provider and ask when you should take your next shot. If you can't reach your provider right away, take your next shot 24 hours from when you had it last. Do this until you get other instructions from your provider.
- Do not take extra medicine or "double up" if you miss a dose.

How do I store the Arixtra®?

You should store your syringes at room temperature and keep them away from moisture, light, and away from children and animals.

Tell your provider:

- If you have kidney disease
- If you have bleeding problems
- If you weigh less than 110 pounds
- If you have an infection in your heart
- If you have taken this medicine before and had problems
- About any changes in the medicine you take, including over the counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products
- About any changes in your health that you are concerned about
- Make sure all your providers (dentist, pharmacist, doctor, etc.) know you are taking Arixtra®.

Note: The term "provider" used in this brochure refers to the person who is taking care of you for your anticoagulation. This could be your doctor, your pharmacist, your nurse, etc.



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Thrombosis Service

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