



## Patient Information for Pradaxa® (dabigatran etexilate)

### What is Pradaxa® (dabigatran etexilate)?

Pradaxa® (dabigatran etexilate) is a new anticoagulant (blood thinner) medication. This medicine was recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the following condition(s):

\* The prevention of stroke (blood clot in the brain) in patients with an irregular heart rhythm called atrial fibrillation.

### How is Pradaxa® (dabigatran etexilate) different from Coumadin® (warfarin)?

Both dabigatran and warfarin are anticoagulants (blood thinner medications), but they work in different ways. Warfarin blocks many different blood clotting factors, and dabigatran blocks one specific blood clotting factor. Here are some of the important differences for you to understand:

	<b>Coumadin® (warfarin)</b>	<b>Pradaxa® (dabigatran)</b>
<b>Dose of medication</b>	The amount of medicine needed is different from person to person and depends on results of blood test monitoring	150 mg
<b>How often the medication is taken</b>	One time per day	Two times per day
<b>Blood testing to monitor the medication</b>	Yes: INR blood tests	None routinely required
<b>Other blood testing</b>	No	Yes—your doctor should order a blood test to check your kidney function before you start dabigatran and then at least once per year
<b>Special diet</b>	Yes, need to be consistent in use of foods containing Vitamin K	No
<b>Interactions with other medicines</b>	Many	Few

	<b>Coumadin® (warfarin)</b>	<b>Pradaxa® (dabigatran)</b>
<b>Special medication instructions</b>	No	Do not chew, break, or open capsules  Take with food if stomach upset occurs  Dispose of capsules not used within 30 days of opening the medication bottle
<b>Stroke prevention</b>	Better than aspirin	For most: as good as or better than warfarin
<b>Major side effects</b>	Bleeding	Bleeding Stomach upset
<b>What to do about blood thinner medicine before surgery or a procedure</b>	Stop warfarin 5-6 days before procedure, may need to take a blood thinner injection while off warfarin  * Always discuss these situations with your blood thinner provider	Skip 2-8 doses before the procedure ( <b>depending on type of procedure and your kidney function</b> ), no need for blood thinner injection  * Always discuss these situations with your blood thinner provider
<b>Antidote</b> (what a doctor can give you to reverse medication effects in case the blood thinner medicine causes a bleeding problem)	Vitamin K	None known (Plasma transfusion may reverse effects partly)
<b>Estimated Cost</b> (actual cost will be different for everyone)	About \$4 per month plus cost of blood testing (about \$20 per blood test)	\$200-240 per month or less if your insurance pays for it

### Who should take Pradaxa® (dabigatran etexilate)?



Dabigatran may be a good blood thinner medication for you if:

- Have a condition the medication is approved for (such as atrial fibrillation)
- Your INR changes a lot or is often outside the goal range
- You have trouble going to the clinic or lab to get your INR blood test done when scheduled or needed
- Your kidneys work well (you have no kidney problems)
- You take your medicine the way you should (you rarely miss a dose of your medication)
- You take no medications that interact with dabigatran
- You can afford the medication

## Who should NOT take Pradaxa® (dabigatran etexilate)?

Dabigatran may NOT be the best blood thinner medication for you if:

- Your INR blood tests are consistently in range while taking warfarin
- You have kidney problems
- You have certain stomach or intestinal problems
- You have liver problems
- You don't always remember to take your medication
- It is hard for you to pay for your medicines

### What should I do next?

**We encourage you to discuss your questions and concerns with your provider who can give you additional guidance. Alternatively, you can schedule an appointment to see one of our blood thinning specialists to learn more at the University Thrombosis Center (801-585-3713).**

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