

What is Arixtra (fondaparinux)?

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

Arixtra (fondaparinux) is an anticoagulant medication. *Anti* means against and *coagulant* refers to blood clotting. Therefore, Arixtra helps reduce harmful clots from forming in the blood.

How does Arixtra work?

Arixtra works by inhibiting the body's natural clotting factors. Blood clots can cause serious medical conditions such as heart attack and stroke.

Why do I need Arixtra?

This medication is used for several days up to a month after hip or knee replacement surgery and in some cases following abdominal surgery. It is during this time that harmful blood clots are most likely to form. Arixtra is also used if you are confined to bed because of a serious illness.

In addition, Arixtra is used to prevent harmful blood clots from forming in the arteries of the heart during episodes of chest pain and heart attacks. Arixtra also may be used for other conditions as determined by your doctor.

How is Arixtra given?

Arixtra is given by an injection under the skin (subcutaneously) in your abdomen.

What are potential adverse effects?

As with all anticoagulants, bleeding is the major adverse effect of Arixtra. Bleeding can occur at virtually any site (gums, urine, eye, skin).

You should contact your healthcare provider if you experience bleeding that does not stop after a few minutes. Other symptoms you should contact your healthcare provider include:

- Persistent headache
- Red or dark brown colored urine
- Nosebleeds
- Vomiting blood
- Bleeding gums
- Bleeding when shaving
- Red or black colored bowel movements
- Unusually heavy vaginal bleeding
- Fall
- Injure yourself

Do I need to have my blood monitored?

Unlike some other anticoagulants, (for example: Coumadin), blood testing is not required for Arixtra dosing. You may be getting your blood drawn for other reasons depending on your medical condition.

Will I stay on Arixtra for a long time?

Length of time on Arixtra is dependent on your medical condition. Some patients are only on Arixtra while hospitalized, while others will continue for a short time after leaving the hospital. Some patients will be transitioned to Coumadin (warfarin) which is an oral anticoagulant medication. Close follow up care is required if you need to take Coumadin for an on-going time period. Your physician will generally overlap Arixtra and Coumadin for a couple of days and then Arixtra is discontinued. Again, your physician will give you a specific plan of care. For more information on Coumadin, see the Greenwich Hospital Patient Education Information Sheet titled "What is Coumadin (warfarin)?"

What are some potential interactions?

It is important that you inform your health care provider about any medications or supplements that you take. Any drugs that can potentially increase bleeding risk are a concern. Some common examples are ibuprofen, naproxen, aspirin (some patients are on aspirin and Arixtra as advised by their physician). Herbal medications such as garlic, ginger, ginkgo, and ginseng all have increased bleeding risks.

I forgot to take my Arixtra yesterday. Should I just double dose today?

DO NOT take an extra injection of Arixtra to catch up. Inject the missed dose as soon as possible on the same day, but do NOT take a double dose the next day to make up for a missed dose. Tell your physician if you have forgotten to take a scheduled dose of Arixtra.

Reference:

Prescription Drug Data base 2002-2004. www.prescriptiondrugdata.com/Arixtra.html

*For more Patient Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at
www.greenwichhospital.org and Click on Patients & Visitors, then Patient Education*