

Dabigatran

Names The generic drug name is dabigatran (da'' bi gat' ran). Pradaxa® is the brand name. There may be other brand names for this medication.

How is Dabigatran Taken?

- Dabigatran is a capsule that you swallow. It is usually taken twice a day. You can take it with or without food.
- Take it at around the same times every day.
- Follow the directions on your prescription label carefully; take it exactly as directed. Do not take more or less of it. Do not take it more often.
- Swallow the capsules whole with a whole glass of water; do not split, chew, or crush them. Do not open the capsules and sprinkle the contents on food or into drinks.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. However, if you remember the missed dose less than 6 hours before your next scheduled dose, skip the missed dose and continue your regular dosing schedule. **Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed dose.**

What is the Purpose of this Drug and How Does it Work?

Dabigatran is used to help prevent blood clots such as deep vein thrombosis (DVT; a blood clot, usually in the leg) and pulmonary embolism (PE; a blood clot in the lung). It is also used to prevent strokes in people who have atrial fibrillation (Afib) that is not caused by heart valve disease.

Dabigatran is in a class of anticoagulant medications called direct thrombin inhibitors. It works by preventing blood clots from forming in the body.

What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin?

Tell your doctor if you:

- are allergic to dabigatran or have any allergies
- have an artificial heart valve
- have or have ever had any type of bleeding problem, ulcer, or kidney disease
- are over age 75; discuss the risks and benefits of this medication for you
- are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breastfeeding

This drug may interact with other medications. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbal or diet supplements you take.

What Are Some Possible Side Effects?

- Upset stomach, nausea, stomach pain
- Heartburn

When Should I Call the Doctor?

Call your doctor immediately if you have:

- back pain, muscle weakness (especially in your legs and feet), numbness or tingling (especially in your legs), or loss of control of your bowels or bladder
- unusual bruising or bleeding: bleeding lasts more than 10-15 minutes or that causes dizziness; black or bloody stools; vomit that is bloody or that looks like coffee grounds; blood in your urine or phlegm /mucus, unusually heavy menstrual bleeding, spontaneous bleeding from your gums or nose, or superficial bleeding into the skin that appears as a rash of pinpoint-sized reddish-purple spots (petechiae)
- signs of infection: Fever of **100.4°F (38°C)** or higher, chills, cough, sore throat, pain or burning upon urination; redness/tenderness at a wound

Note: Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room if you have difficulty breathing; swelling in face, mouth, tongue, or throat; heart palpitations; chest tightness; weak, rapid pulse; flushing; and/or nausea/vomiting. These may be signs of a severe allergic reaction.

What Else Should I Know

- Dabigatran will help prevent strokes and blood clots only as long as you continue to take it. Continue to take dabigatran even if you feel well. Talk to your doctor because your risk of a blood clot may increase.
- If you are having surgery or dental surgery, tell the doctor or dentist that you are taking dabigatran.
- Keep all appointments with your doctor and the laboratory.
- Keep this medication in the container it came in, tightly closed. Store it away from light, excess heat and moisture (not in the bathroom). Do not store dabigatran in a pillbox or pill organizer.
- Open only one bottle of dabigatran at a time. Finish your opened bottle of dabigatran before opening a new bottle.
- Dabigatran prevents blood from clotting normally, so it may take longer than usual for you to stop bleeding.
- If you have epidural or spinal anesthesia or a spinal puncture while taking a "blood thinner", you are at risk for collection of blood in the spinal column that could cause you to become paralyzed. Be sure all your doctors know all the medications you are taking, particularly any medication, vitamin, or supplement that affects blood clotting.
- If you have any questions, please ask your doctor or pharmacist.