

Understanding your treatment for atrial fibrillation

For patients prescribed Lixiana[®] (edoxaban)

If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in the package leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

It's important to read the Lixiana Package leaflet provided with your medicine.

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Starting treatment with Lixiana[®]

You have been prescribed Lixiana[®] (edoxaban) to help protect you against the risk of stroke associated with nonvalvular atrial fibrillation. Whether you have been newly diagnosed with nonvalvular atrial fibrillation or are switching to Lixiana[®] from a different medication, you will probably have questions about your treatment.

This booklet provides practical information about your condition and aims to answer questions you might have about Lixiana[®].

If you would like more information, you should ensure you read the leaflet that comes in the pack with your tablets.

This booklet has been developed to provide useful information, but is not intended to replace your doctor's advice. If you have any concerns or questions about your health or medication, your doctor is always the best person to ask.

Reporting of side effects

If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. This includes any possible side effects not listed in the package leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

What is nonvalvular atrial fibrillation?

When you have atrial fibrillation, your heart beats quickly and irregularly (you may have noticed this when you first had symptoms).

Atrial fibrillation is common in people with other heart conditions, including high blood pressure, and is sometimes associated with other conditions such as diabetes or asthma. However, often it affects athletic, healthy people and the cause can be unknown.

Approximately 800,000 people in the UK have atrial fibrillation. It occurs in adults of any age but is more common in the older population. About 10% of people over the age of 75 are affected.

Just so you know:

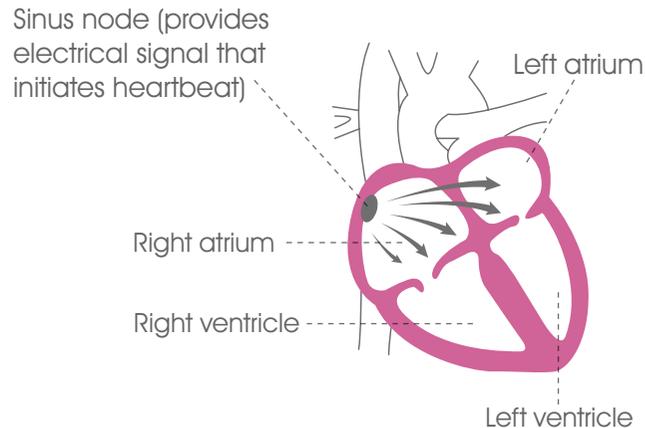
There are two types of atrial fibrillation that you may hear being spoken about:

- 1)** Valvular atrial fibrillation – when rheumatic disease results in the hardening and narrowing of a valve in the heart
- 2)** Nonvalvular atrial fibrillation, otherwise known as NVAf – the most common type of AF which is not associated with rheumatic disease

What is nonvalvular atrial fibrillation?

A normal beating heart

The chambers of the heart contract smoothly and regularly, to maintain a steady blood flow around the body.



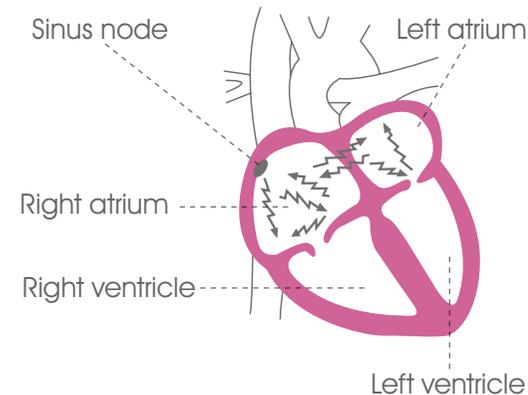
Electrocardiogram (ECG) of a normal, rhythmic heartbeat



In a normal heart rhythm, the rate of your heartbeat can range from 60–100 beats per minute

A heart with atrial fibrillation

The upper chambers of your heart contract rapidly but partially, disrupting the blood flow through your heart.



Electrocardiogram (ECG) of an irregular heartbeat caused by atrial fibrillation



In atrial fibrillation the rhythm of your heartbeat may speed up or feel irregular

What might you experience with atrial fibrillation?

Atrial fibrillation affects different people in different ways.

You might feel:

- Your heart is racing or fluttering (called 'palpitations')
- Your heart beating noticeably (when you haven't noticed it before)
- Chest pain, pressure or discomfort
- Abdominal pain
- Short of breath
- Lightheaded
- Fatigued or lacking in energy
- That you are unable to exercise

Or you might not feel any of these.

Are you aware that atrial fibrillation increases your risk of stroke?

The irregular blood flow through your heart due to atrial fibrillation increases the chance of blood clots forming. This increases your risk of having a stroke. A stroke is a serious medical condition, which occurs when the blood supply to a part of the brain is cut off.

Some people who survive a stroke can experience long-term problems due to injury in their brain. This may result in the need for help from a partner or carer to support them in their usual activities.

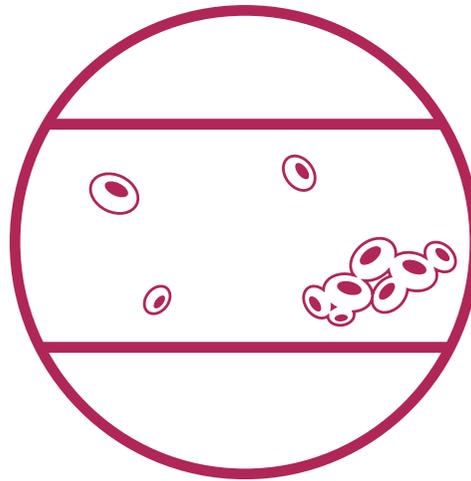
Your doctor has prescribed Lixiana® to help reduce your risk of suffering dangerous clots and stroke.

Are you aware that atrial fibrillation increases your risk of stroke?

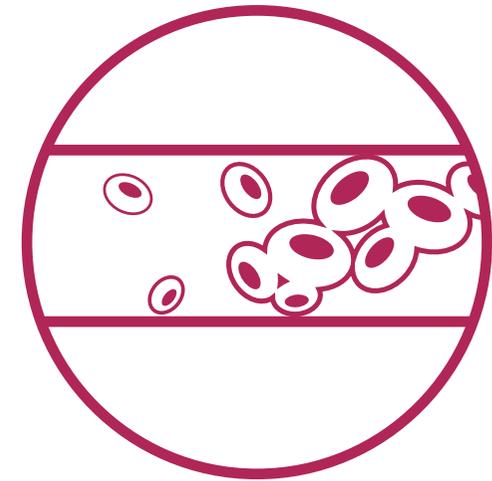
This is how a blood clot can cause a stroke:



In atrial fibrillation, blood clots may form in the chambers of the heart.



Sometimes these clots break away and travel in the bloodstream to other parts of the body.



If a clot gets stuck in a blood vessel supplying the brain, it can form a blockage.

This prevents blood (and oxygen) reaching that part of the brain, resulting in a stroke.

Can you reduce your risk of stroke?

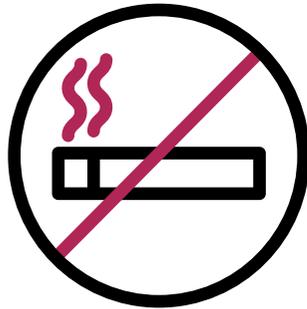
Taking Lixiana[®] every day and making lifestyle changes can help reduce your risk of stroke.

Over the next few pages you will find tips for prevention, as well as information about taking Lixiana[®], which has been designed to help prevent stroke. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can also help reduce your risk of suffering from a stroke.

There are some risk factors for stroke that you can't change, such as your age, gender and any existing medical conditions. But you can reduce your risk of stroke by considering some of the things we all do every day and doing things a little differently.

Can you reduce your risk of stroke?

Stop smoking and drink responsibly



If you smoke, it is a good idea to stop

Ask your doctor for help to quit smoking. The reasons you should quit smoking are:

- It makes your arteries 'fur up', which makes a blood clot more likely
- It makes it more likely that you will develop high blood pressure, which is a major risk factor for stroke

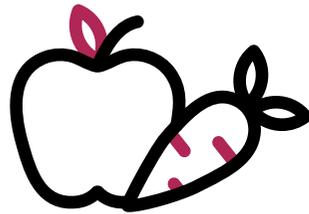


Don't drink alcohol every day

Keep your intake within safe limits. This is because:

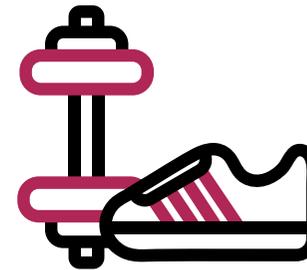
- Drinking too much alcohol can make your blood pressure increase rapidly, which is a major risk factor for stroke

Can you reduce your risk of stroke?



Eat a healthy diet

- **Eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day**
 - **Choose oily fish**, like salmon and mackerel, a couple of times a week
 - **Include plenty of fibre in your diet** (such as whole grains, beans, peas and nuts)
- **Avoid high-fat foods and saturated fats.** Saturated fats can raise the amount of 'bad' cholesterol in your body, which makes your arteries 'fur up' and increases your risk of developing a blood clot
- **Reduce the amount of salt in your food** as high levels of salt can raise your blood pressure, which is a major risk factor for stroke. You could try flavouring your food with herbs and spices or a little lemon juice instead



Get active

- Take regular exercise** to lower your blood pressure, help balance fat levels in your body, improve your ability control blood glucose and help you lose weight
- Being overweight increases your chances of high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes; all of which can increase your risk of stroke

How does Lixiana[®] work?

Lixiana[®] is an “anticoagulant”. This means it reduces the ability of your blood to clot (thins your blood), which helps to prevent you from suffering dangerous blood clots and treats existing ones.

Lixiana[®] works by blocking a component in your blood called “factor Xa”, which plays an important role in the blood clotting process.

How should you take Lixiana[®]?

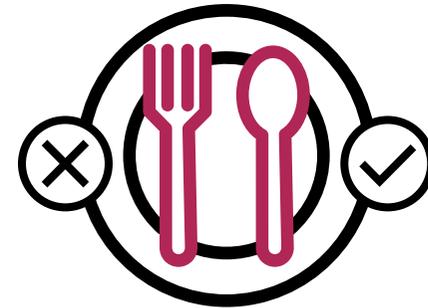
You should have been told to take one Lixiana[®] tablet once per day:



You should take your tablets at the dose prescribed by your doctor.



Swallow the tablet, preferably with water.



Lixiana[®] can be taken with or without food.

Taking your tablet at the same time every day helps to make it part of your daily routine, which can help you to remember.

What if you forget to take Lixiana[®]?

If you remember on the same day: Take the tablet immediately and then take your usual dose the next day.

If you remember the next day or later: Take your usual dose for that day. **NEVER** double the prescribed dose in a single day. It is very important to take the tablets exactly as directed. Never take larger or more frequent doses than prescribed.

You should check with your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about your treatment.

What about potential side effects?

Like all medication, Lixiana® can cause side effects, although not everybody experiences them.

Like other anticoagulant medication, Lixiana® is designed to thin your blood and help prevent blood clots. So you may have an increased risk of bleeding while taking it.

Speak to your doctor immediately if you experience any of the following signs of bleeding:

- Bruising or bleeding under the skin
- Nose bleed or cuts that take a long time to stop bleeding
- Red or dark brown urine
- Coughing up or vomiting blood or ground coffee-like material
- Red or black stools
- Bleeding gums
- Bleeding that does not stop by itself
- Abnormally heavy periods or unexpected vaginal bleeding

Bleeding is not always obvious. If you experience any side effects, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. It is important not to stop taking Lixiana® without talking to them first.

Please refer to package leaflet for further information about adverse effects.

Is there anything else you should consider when taking Lixiana®?

Patient alert card

You will find a patient alert card in the pack with your tablets for you to fill in. This card contains important information about your treatment, your doctor and emergency contacts. You should carry this at all times and present it to your healthcare professional, pharmacist, surgeon or dentist before any medical treatment or intervention.

Like all anticoagulant medication, there may be an increased risk of bleeding while taking Lixiana®. But there are some sensible precautions you can take to help prevent this. Some of these are outlined on the next few pages. If you still have questions, refer to your Lixiana® package leaflet or speak to your doctor.



Is there anything else you should consider when taking Lixiana[®]?



What if I need to see my dentist?

Tell your dentist you are taking Lixiana[®] before starting dental treatment. Many dental procedures are noninvasive; in which case the risk of bleeding is low.

Your dentist will decide if he or she needs to take any special precautions.



What if I am injured?

If you bleed as a result of a minor injury, apply constant pressure to the site for at least 5–10 minutes using a clean dressing.

If you can't stop the bleeding or if you have a major injury, seek medical help immediately.

Is there anything else you should consider when taking Lixiana[®]?



What if I think I am pregnant?

Oral anticoagulants taken in the early weeks of pregnancy may carry a risk of damage to the unborn child. Taking Lixiana[®] if you are pregnant or breastfeeding is prohibited. If you are a woman of childbearing age and you think you may be pregnant or are planning a pregnancy, consult your doctor immediately.

If you have any unanswered questions, refer to the Lixiana[®] Patient Information Leaflet that comes in the pack with your tablets or contact your doctor.

Still have questions?

Other sources of information and support:

Atrial Fibrillation Association
www.atrialfibrillation.org.uk
01789 867 502

Stroke Association
www.stroke.org.uk
0303 303 3100

Arrhythmia Alliance
www.heartrhythmalliance.org/aa/uk
01789 867 501

Anticoagulation Europe (UK)
www.anticoagulationuk.org
020 8289 6875

Thrombosis UK (formerly Lifeblood:
The Thrombosis Charity)
www.thrombosisuk.org
0300 772 9603