

Want more information about conditions that cause harmful blood clots?

Atrial Fibrillation (AF) <http://www.heartrhythmalliance.org/afa/uk/atrial-fibrillation>

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) <http://www.anticoagulationeurope.org/conditions/deep-vein-thrombosis>

Pulmonary Embolism (PE) <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pulmonary-embolism/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

There are many patient support organisations that can help you. They also produce factsheets on each anticoagulant, and have telephone helplines available to answer your questions.

ACE – www.anticoagulationeurope.org – tel 020 8289 6875

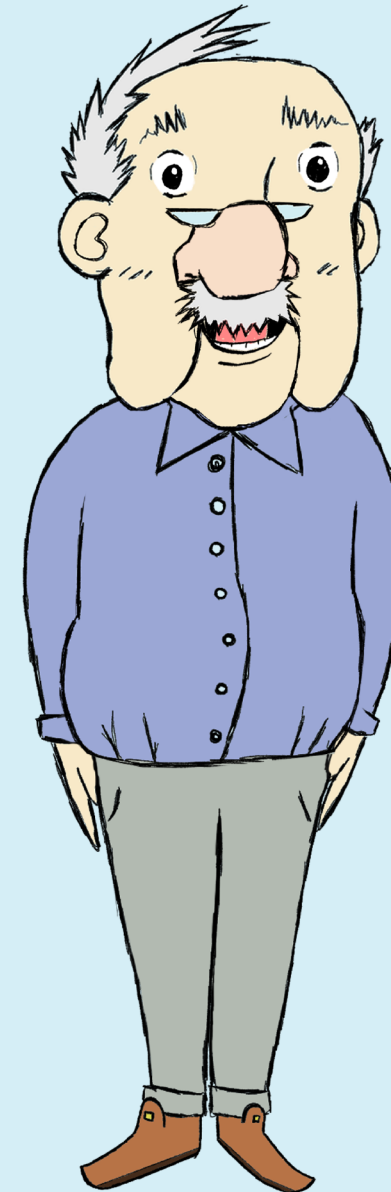
AF Association – www.afa.org.uk – tel 01789 867521

British Heart Foundation – www.bhf.org – tel: 0300 330 3311

Thrombosis UK – www.thrombosisuk.org – tel 0300 7729603

Follow Jack's experience with anticoagulants @StoptheClots or search online 'Starting Anticoagulation with Jack'

Starting Anticoagulation with Jack



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Anticoagulants are medicines which prevent harmful blood clots. Anticoagulants do this by slightly changing the balance of the natural clotting process. This means that you are less likely to get a blood clot but you may bleed a little more than usual if you injure yourself or have another health problem which causes bleeding.

Anticoagulants include medicines that you can take by mouth like warfarin, apixaban, dabigatran, edoxaban and rivaroxaban. They also include many medicines that need to be given by injection like enoxaparin, dalteparin, tinzaparin or fondaparinux.

Some people may experience side effects from anticoagulant medicines, but most do not. If you take your anticoagulant as recommended by your doctor, nurse or pharmacist and discuss any concerns with them, it is unlikely you will have any significant problems from the medicine.

If you notice signs of **unexpected** bruising or bleeding **do not** take the next dose of medicine and report these symptoms to your GP, pharmacist or nurse immediately. If the symptoms are **severe or not resolving** you should go to your local A&E department as soon as possible.

Unexpected bleeding symptoms may include:

- Nosebleeds which last longer than 10 minutes.
- Blood in stools or black 'tarry' stools.
- Blood in vomit or sputum (spit)
- Blood in urine.
- Large bruises that develop for no clear reason.
- Extreme headache with drowsiness or weakness.

Talk to your community pharmacist. They will help you understand your medicines and find a way to help you take them regularly each day. Taking your medicines regularly is really important. What do you do every day which could help you to remember to take your medicines?

Make sure you have an anticoagulant alert card in your wallet or purse so it's clear that you are on an anticoagulant and why. Tell your family and friends. All of these things can help healthcare professionals with your care if you become unwell.