**Patient Information about Pradaxa® (Dabigatran)**

**What is Pradaxa?**
- Pradaxa is a prescription medicine used to reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people who have atrial fibrillation, and who do not have a heart valve problem.
- Pradaxa belongs to a class of medications called anticoagulants. Another anticoagulant more commonly used is warfarin (Coumadin®).

**Why would I take Pradaxa?**
- You would take Pradaxa for atrial fibrillation, which puts you at risk for forming dangerous blood clots.
- Your doctor may have switched you from warfarin to Pradaxa due to inconsistent internal normalized ratio (INR) values.

**How do I take Pradaxa?**
- Take Pradaxa twice a day, at the same time every day.
- You can take Pradaxa with or without food.
- Swallow Pradaxa capsules whole. Do not break, chew or empty the pellets from the capsule.
- If you miss a dose of Pradaxa, take it as soon as you remember. If your next dose is less than six hours away, skip the missed dose. **Do not take two doses of Pradaxa at the same time.**

**Pros Versus Cons: Pradaxa Compared to Warfarin**

**Cons**
- Higher cost – insurance copay may be $40-75 per month. If paying cash, it is ~$275-300 per month.
- The capsules cannot be placed into weekly pillboxes due to moisture/stability problem. Pradaxa must be stored in the original package to keep it dry.
- Stomach or gastrointestinal problems are the most common side effects, including indigestion, upset stomach and abdominal burning or pain.
- Bleeds/bruises or increase risk of bleeds are similar to warfarin.
- After opening the bottle, Pradaxa must be used within 60 days.
- There is no antidote for overdose.
- Dosing is twice a day, in the morning and evening.

**Pros**
- There is no blood test or blood level to monitor. A blood test could be done to test if you have the drug in your blood stream, but it does not correlate with therapeutics.
- Pradaxa has no interactions with alcohol.
- There are no interactions with vitamin-K-containing food, such as spinach, broccoli and cabbages. Thus there is no restriction on diet.
From Pradaxa’s Patient Medication Guide (From the Manufacturer)

You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take Pradaxa and:

- Are more than 75 years old
- Have kidney problems
- Have stomach or intestinal bleeding that is recent or keeps coming back, or you have a stomach ulcer
- Take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, including:
  - Aspirin or aspirin-containing products
  - Long-term (chronic) use of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
  - Warfarin sodium (Coumadin®, Jantoven®)
  - A medicine that contains heparin
  - Clopidogrel (Plavix®)
  - Prasugrel (Effient®)
  - Rivaroxaban (Xarelto)

Tell your doctor if you take any of these medicines. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure if your medicine is one listed above.

Pradaxa can increase your risk of bleeding because it lessens the ability of your blood to clot.

While you take Pradaxa:

- You may bruise more easily
- It may take longer for any bleeding to stop

Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding:

- Unexpected bleeding or bleeding that lasts a long time, such as:
  - Unusual bleeding from the gums
  - Nose bleeds that happen often
  - Menstrual bleeding or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
- Bleeding that is severe or you cannot control
- Unusual bleeding from the gums
- Nose bleeds that happen often
- Menstrual bleeding or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal bleeding that is severe or you cannot control
- Pink or brown urine
- Red or black stools (looks like tar)
- Bruises that happen without a known cause or get larger
- Cough up blood or blood clots
- Vomit blood or your vomit looks like “coffee grounds”
- Unexpected pain, swelling or joint pain
- Headaches, feeling dizzy or weak