



## Low-Risk PE (Pulmonary Embolism) After Discharge from the Department of Emergency Medicine

---

You visited the Emergency Department for a Pulmonary Embolism (PE). PE usually occurs when a blood clot in a vein separates from the vein, travels to the lungs, and cuts off blood flow in the lungs. The most common cause of a PE is a **deep vein thrombosis (DVT)**: a blood clot in a large vein deep in a leg, arm, or elsewhere in the body.

While PE can be very serious and, in some cases, life-threatening, most people with a PE are at low risk for complications and can safely be treated at home. It is important that you have access to the proper medications and follow up. Your providers in the Michigan Medicine Emergency Department have evaluated your case carefully and concluded that home treatment is a safe option for you.

### **What medication will I take?**

The key medication for people with PE is a blood thinner (or “anticoagulant”). For most people treated at home, the best option is one of two oral medications: Xarelto® (rivaroxaban) or Eliquis® (apixaban).

- If you receive Xarelto® (rivaroxaban), please take 15mg twice daily for 21 days and then 20mg once daily.
- If you receive Eliquis® (apixaban), please take 10mg twice daily for 7 days and then 5mg twice daily.

Your providers in the Michigan Medicine Emergency Department have reviewed your case carefully to ensure that you are a good candidate to start a blood thinner. If you still have questions about starting a blood thinner, please ask your provider.

It is very important that you take your follow-up medication exactly as directed. You received a voucher from Social Work for a free month (without co-pay) of a blood thinner, unless you declined.

Do not stop this medication without first talking to a doctor. Stopping your medication too early could lead to more clots and possibly death.

If you have any questions about your medication before your follow-up visit, please call the University of Michigan Cardiovascular Center at (888) 287-1082.

### **What follow-up care will I receive?**

An appointment will be arranged for you while you are in the Emergency Department. It will occur within 1 week of you being seen in the Emergency Department. It is very important that you schedule and go to this appointment.

### **How can I care for myself at home?**

Taking care of yourself is very important. To help prevent more blood clots from forming, follow your healthcare provider's instructions and do the following:

- Take your medicines exactly as instructed. Don't skip doses. If you miss a dose, call your primary care provider (PCP), and ask what you should do.
- Tell all your doctors and dentists that you are taking a blood thinner.
- Be careful not to become pregnant while taking a blood thinner. It can cause harm to the baby. If you are planning to become pregnant, call your healthcare provider to discuss the plan.
- Get all lab tests as recommended.
- Wear elastic cloth on your lower legs (compression stockings) if your healthcare provider has instructed you to do so.
- Get up and get moving.

- While sitting for long periods of time, move your knees, ankles, feet, and toes.
- If you have any other questions or concerns about your medications, call your PCP.

### **When should I call my healthcare provider?**

Call your primary care provider (PCP) right away if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Pain, swelling, and redness in your leg, arm, or other body area. These symptoms may indicate another blood clot
- Blood in your urine
- Bleeding with bowel movements (this might look like dark or tarry poop)
- Bleeding from the nose, gums, a cut, or vagina
- Dizziness

### **When should I call 911?**

Call 911 or present to urgent care right away if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Chest pain
- Trouble breathing
- Coughing (especially coughing up blood)
- Fast heartbeat
- Profuse sweating
- Fainting
- Injuries from a fall (including hitting your head)
- Heavy or uncontrolled bleeding

## What lifestyle changes should I make?

To help prevent problems with your heart and blood vessels, do the following:

- If you smoke, get help to quit. Talk with your healthcare provider about medicines and programs that can assist you.
- Stay at a healthy weight. If you are overweight, talk to your healthcare provider about losing weight.
- Try to exercise at least 30 minutes on most days. Before starting an exercise program, talk with your healthcare provider.
- When traveling by car, make frequent stops to get up and move around.
- On long airplane rides, get up and move around when possible. If you can't get up, wiggle your toes, move your ankles, and tighten your calves to keep your blood moving.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by University of Michigan Health for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by U-M Health and for which U-M Health does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan

Edited by: Karelyn Munro, BA

Patient Education by [University of Michigan Health](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 02/2022