

# Dronedarone: Information for Patients

## Introduction

This leaflet has been created as an information resource for patients who have been advised to begin Dronedarone therapy. The information outlined in this leaflet should help guide individuals to make informed decisions about their care and instruct them on how to escalate adverse effects appropriately.

## What is Dronedarone and what is it used for?

Dronedarone is an anti-arrhythmic medication and is indicated for use in patients with atrial fibrillation. It aims to alleviate symptoms by maintaining normal rhythm and providing effective heart rate control. Dronedarone is used as an interim or long-term therapy. Your specialist will discuss the planned duration of Dronedarone treatment as well as any other alternative strategies.

## Pre-initiation

Prior to starting Dronedarone, your specialist will organise several baseline checks. These include blood tests and an electrocardiogram (ECG). These checks are part of the monitoring protocol that aims to minimise the risk of adverse reactions. It may also be necessary to adjust some of your existing medications if their use is contraindicated alongside Dronedarone. Your specialist will discuss this with you.

## Dosage

The starting and maintenance dose of Dronedarone is prescribed and initiated under specialist supervision. The daily dosage of dronedarone is as follows:

Dronedarone 400mg	Twice Daily
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Dronedarone tablets should be swallowed whole alongside mealtimes. If a dose is missed, patients should not double the dose. Instead, take the next dose at the following scheduled time.

## Contraindications

- Grapefruit should be avoided during treatment with Dronedarone.
- Dronedarone is contraindicated when co-administered with the drug Dabigatran. If you are on this drug, the team will recommend an alternative.
- We advise patients on regular cholesterol lowering medications to report any signs of unexplained muscle pain, tenderness, weakness, or dark coloured urine.
- Do not take Dronedarone if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- If you start any new medications whilst on Dronedarone, make sure your pharmacist and doctor know you are taking it.

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### Common Side Effects

Whilst Dronedarone is generally well tolerated, there are associated side effects. These can include gastrointestinal disturbances and dermatological disorders. Dronedarone also increases sensitivity to sunlight and vulnerability to sun damage. Therefore appropriate UV protection (sun screen and clothing) should be applied whilst on Dronedarone.

### Dangerous Side Effects

Dronedarone can rarely cause reactions affecting the lungs, kidney and liver. If you develop a new cough, abdominal pain, dark urine or jaundice, please contact your arrhythmia nurse specialist or heart team.

### Monitoring

It is important that regular blood tests are carried out according to the following intervals, to minimise the risks mentioned above.

- One week post initiation
- Monthly for the first six months
- Every three months for six months
- Every six months thereafter

The arrhythmia nurse specialists can arrange these through hospital services or via your GP (dependent on availability). You will be contacted by the nurse specialists should there be any cause for concern.

### Driving

Taking Dronedarone does not itself mean you cannot drive unless your underlying cardiac condition means that you should not drive.

### How to Contact Us

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham

Arrhythmia Nurse Specialist Service	0121 371 2511
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)	0121 371 3280

### Where can I get more information?

Arrhythmia Alliance	<a href="http://www.heartrhythmalliance.org/aa/uk">www.heartrhythmalliance.org/aa/uk</a>
Atrial Fibrillation Association	<a href="http://www.atrialfibrillation.org/afa/uk">www.atrialfibrillation.org/afa/uk</a>
The British Heart Foundation	<a href="http://www.bhf.org.uk">www.bhf.org.uk</a>

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version, please ask a member of staff or email [patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk).