

UW Medicine



Treatment with Enoxaparin

Lovenox

This handout explains treatment with a blood-thinning medicine called enoxaparin (brand name Lovenox).

What is enoxaparin?

Enoxaparin (Lovenox) is a blood-thinning (*anticoagulant*) medicine. It is used to keep blood clots from forming or to treat a new or existing blood clot.



Why do I need to take enoxaparin?

This drug may be given to:

- Prevent blood clots while you are in the hospital.
- Prevent blood clots at home, if you are at risk.
- Treat new blood clots.
- Help “bridge” your transition to warfarin, a blood thinner that you can take by mouth. Warfarin is used to help treat:
 - *Atrial fibrillation* (abnormal heartbeat)
 - Stroke
 - Heart attack
 - *Deep vein thrombosis* (a blood clot in a vein, also called DVT)
 - *Pulmonary embolism* (a blood clot in the lungs, also called PE)
 - Heart-valve disease or heart-valve replacement

Talk with your doctor or your Anticoagulation Clinic if you have questions about taking enoxaparin.

How do I give myself enoxaparin?

Enoxaparin is given as a *subcutaneous* (under the skin) injection. You can inject yourself, or have a family member or friend do it for

you. See the handout “How to Give Yourself a Subcutaneous (SQ) Injection” for step-by-step instructions.

How much should I take?

Enoxaparin comes in a pre-filled syringe. Depending on your dose, you may give yourself a full syringe or only a portion of a syringe. Your pharmacist will give you full instructions on how much to inject and how many times a day to give yourself an injection.

Important: Keep giving yourself your injections until your doctor or Anticoagulation Clinic tells you to stop.

What are the side effects of enoxaparin?

Side effects from enoxaparin can include:

- Pain, discomfort, and minor bruising at the injection sites.
- Minor bleeding, such as:
 - Gum bleeding while brushing your teeth
 - Nosebleeds
 - Easy bruising
 - More bleeding after minor cuts
 - For women: longer menstrual bleeding

When to Call

Call your doctor or the Anticoagulation Clinic, or come to the hospital emergency department **right away** if you:

- Have a serious fall
- Hit your head
- Have any of these symptoms of **major bleeding**:
 - Red or dark brown urine
 - Red or black, tarry stool
 - Vomiting or coughing up blood
 - Severe headache or stomachache
 - A lot of bruises, or bruises that you cannot explain
 - Very large bruises at the injection sites

- Nosebleeds, bleeding gums, or unusual bleeding that happen often
- Any bleeding that doesn't stop or is very heavy

Blood Clots

Rarely, you may get a blood clot even though you are taking a drug to prevent them. Clots may occur in your leg (*deep vein thrombosis*), in your lung (*pulmonary embolism*), or in your brain (*stroke*).

Call your doctor or Anticoagulation Clinic or go to the emergency room **right away** if you have any of these symptoms:

- New pain, swelling, redness, or heat in your arm, leg, or foot
- New shortness of breath, chest pain, or rapid heartbeat
- New cough, including coughing up blood
- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg
- Sudden confusion
- Sudden trouble speaking or understanding speech
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination

What should I do if I miss a dose?

- Do **not** double your dose to “catch up.”
- If you take enoxaparin **1 time a day** and miss a dose:
 - If you remember it later the same day, take your dose when you remember it.
 - If you don't remember it until the next day, skip the missed dose. Take your usual dose at the normal time.
- If you take enoxaparin **2 times a day** and miss a dose:
 - Take the missed dose when you remember it, then take the next dose 12 hours later. You will be on a new schedule.

Try not to miss any doses of enoxaparin. Call your doctor or Anticoagulation Clinic if you are not sure what to do about a missed dose.

What other precautions should I take?

Call your doctor and/or Anticoagulation Clinic **right away** if:

- You are scheduled for surgery or any other procedure, including dental work
- Anyone else tells you to stop or change your enoxaparin dose
- You become pregnant or are planning to become pregnant

How do I dispose of “sharps” (needles) safely?

Important: Do **not** flush needles or syringes down the toilet.

- Safely place all used syringes in a “sharps container” or other plastic container, such as an empty juice bottle. You can buy a sharps container at a pharmacy. Leave the needles attached to the syringes.
- Store your used sharps container out of reach of children and pets.
- Ask your pharmacist if you can bring the filled sharps container back to the pharmacy for drop-off. If you can, drop off your full container there.
- You can also drop off your sharps container at a public health clinic. Ask staff at their front desk for help.
- Or, you can safely dispose of your sharps container 24 hours a day in drop boxes outside some public health clinics. Check with your local public health department or fire department for drop-box locations.
- **It is illegal to put used needles (sharps) or syringes in your regular garbage can or recycling containers.** If your trash collector finds needles or syringes in your trash, they will not pick up your trash. You might also have to pay a fine.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Anticoagulation Clinics:

- UWMC - Montlake:
206.598.4874
- UWMC - Northwest:
206.668.1282
- Seattle Cancer Care Alliance:
206.606.6756
- Harborview Medical Center:
206.744.2976

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.598.6190 and ask for the Anticoagulation Clinic pharmacist on call to be paged.