

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 any questions about taking your 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
 - Unexplained, excessive bruising
 - Very large bruises at the injection sites
 - Frequent nosebleeds, bleeding gums, or unusual bleeding
 - Any bleeding that doesn't stop or is very heavy

Blood Clots

Rarely, you may get a blood clot even though you are taking enoxaparin to prevent clotting. 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 **once 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 **twice 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 to 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 container at a public health clinic. Ask the clinic receptionist there 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 dispose of 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 could also be fined.

Questions?

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

Weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., call your Anticoagulation Clinic:

- UW Medical Center:
206.598.4874
- Harborview Medical Center: 206.744.2976
- Seattle Cancer Care Alliance: 206.288.6756

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