



from the

# DRUG DESK

A Drug Information Update from the B.C. Drug and Poison Information Centre

**Editor:** Beverly Louis, BSc(Pharm)

**Reviewer:** Laird Birmingham, MD, MHSc, FRCP

## Dabigatran Q & A

### Are there any special handling requirements for dabigatran?

**YES.** Special care must be taken to ensure dabigatran is stored and dispensed in the original bottle or blister package. This minimizes drug break down and loss of potency from exposure to moisture. Dabigatran must be used within 30 days of opening the bottle.

### Can dabigatran capsules be opened?

**NO.** The bioavailability of dabigatran capsules can increase by 75% if they are opened and the pellets sprinkled over food or into a beverage. Capsules should therefore be swallowed whole to decrease the risk of bleeding with this medication.

### How do you switch from dabigatran to warfarin?

**Monitor CrCl.** Before a patient is switched from dabigatran to warfarin, measure their creatinine clearance (CrCl). The following regimen can be used depending on the patient's creatinine clearance (CrCl):

If CrCl is > 50mL/min: start warfarin 3 days before discontinuing dabigatran.

If CrCl is 31-50mL/min: start warfarin 2 days before discontinuing dabigatran.

If CrCl is 15-30mL/min: start warfarin 1 day before discontinuing dabigatran.

**NOTE:** Dabigatran can interfere with INR measurements for up to two days after discontinuation. Wait 3 to 4 days after dabigatran therapy is stopped before measuring the INR to monitor warfarin therapy.

**Written By:** Kathy McInnes, BSc(Pharm)

**Produced:** December 2011

References available upon request.