**Plavix (Clopidogrel) − In Simple Terms**

**By Jeannie Salgy**

Plavix (Clopigogrel) has been around for awhile now. There are multitudes of studies, articles,

research results, and news items being reported about Plavix constantly. One search on the internet will net millions of results in an instant. While all of the information is helpful to someone, sometimes it is a little more extensive or technical than the average person may need in their investigation or personal research. The focus of this article is to attempt to explain a few things about Plavix (Clopidogrel) in simple terms.

What is Plavix?

Plavix is a trade name for Clopidogrel Bisulphate, which is an antiplatelet medication proven to help blood platelets from sticking together. It is often prescribed to patients that have had a heart attack or stroke. Plavix (Clopidogrel) is used in situations where future risk of these occurances may be present. Plavix (Clopidogrel) is often used in the treatment of coronary artery disease, peripheral vascular disease, and cerebrovascular disease as well.

In the human body, there is a natural substance, called ADP− Adenosine Biphosphate. It is present in the bloodstream and binds to it's receptors on blood platelets. ADP is a chemical that causes clumping, or aggregation of platelets that begin the process of blood clotting. One of the leading causes of heart attack or stroke is blood clotting. It is a blood clot in an artery supplying blood to the brain or heart that can cause such an occurrence.

How Does Plavix (Clopidogrel) Work?

Plavix works by helping to prevent ADP from binding to its receptors on platelets. Because Plavix (Clopidogrel) stops ADP from binding to platelets, it reduces the likelihood of clots forming. In simple terms, Plavix (Clopidogrel) is an an inhibitor of ADP induced platelet clumping.

Clopidogrel is the active ingredient in Plavix, which is sometimes called a "blood−thinning" medicine. ("Blood Thinner" is a term used by professionals to present an explanation that patients can relate to). Plavix (Clopidogrel) actually causes the blood to become "less sticky".

Blood clot formation can be extremely dangerous for other reasons, too. A clot in a blood vessel can cause a blockage− and cutting off supply to an organ or a clot in a blood vessel in the legs or arms can cause gangrene. For someone that has already had a heart attack or stroke, there is the risk of it happening again. Plavix is designed to deter the process of blood clot formation by inhibiting the elements that cause them in the first place, and thus decreasing the likelihood of future occurrence.

Who Should Take Plavix (Clopidogrel)?

The best possible source of information and advice regarding your health or health maintenance plan, is your physician. Clot formation is the cause of most heart attacks and strokes, and your doctor may have suggested or prescribed Plavix (Clopidogrel) if you have recently had a stroke or heart attack; if you have been diagnosed with Periphery Artery Disease; were recently hospitalized with heart related chest pain, ie; unstable angina or non−Q−wave heart attack.

Because of the dangers of blood clotting, your physician may suggest Plavix (Clopidogrel) as a treatment to inhibit the formation of clots and clustering, therefore reducing risk of future events.

If you are currently using medications prescribed for blood pressure and cholesterol, keep in mind that they help reduce overall heart and blood−related risks, but they do not inhibit the formation of clots. This is the function of Plavix (Clopidogrel).

If you and your doctor have decided on Plavix (Clopidogrel), the treatment should be administered as directed. Plavix (Clopidogrel) is widely prescribed in a 75mg dose, taken once a day. Treatment should not be started or stopped without the advice of your physician.

*The content herein is not intended as advice and does not replace advice or methods prescribed by your doctor.

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**Ginkgo Biloba And Drug Interactions**

**By Sarah Thomas**

The ginkgo biloba tree has been around for more than 200 million years. And it has been used for all sorts of health issues in China beginning 5000 years ago. By the 1600's, ginkgo biloba was thought to have died out but a German botanist found that in the pagoda gardens cared for by the Buddhist monks in China, it was still very much alive. At present, the plant can be found all over the world including Europe where it is used a great deal for its various healing properties.

If a person takes certain medications in combination with ginkgo biloba, the affects of could be either positive or negative. Therefore it is important to proceed with caution and consult a doctor to avoid ginkgo drug interaction issues. Ginkgo biloba drug interactions may positively affect a person when combined with cyclosporine drugs. This interaction guards the cell membrane from damage. A drug

like papaverine, that is used to cure erectile dysfunctions, will also benefit from the ginkgo drug interaction. It improves the success rate of the drug because the ginkgo biloba has similar properties. Another possible positive affect of the combination of drugs and ginkgo biloba is the increase in the affects of the anti depressant drug, monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOI) in patients. This affect may go either way though so one has to be careful.

There are other drugs that work badly with ginkgo biloba. In these rare instances, you must be careful and follow your doctor's advice. One such area is the drug interaction with ginkgo biloba that may decrease the affect of drugs such as carbamazepine or valproic acid. These drugs are anticonvulsants taken by patients to help with seizures.

Ginkgo drug interactions have an impact on anyone who is using anti−coagulant medications. Ginkgo has blood thinning or anticoagulant properties. If you are taking drugs such as clopidogrel, heparin, ticlopidine, warfarin or dipyridamole you should avoid ginkgo biloba supplements.

People who are suffering with high blood pressure could be affected by the ginkgo biloba and drug interaction especially if they are using thiazide during treatment. Then there is trazodone, another antidepressant, in this instance, the drug and ginkgo biloba interaction may cause a coma. If you take only recommended amounts of ginkgo biloba and avoid the plant extract when there could be a negative interaction with other drugs, you should be fine.

If you have any concerns or questions about the safety of taking ginkgo biloba supplements while you are taking other medication, then you should discuss the issue with your physician who will be able to advise you based on your particular medical situation.

Sarah Thomas is an established freelance writer. You can find more of her writing at

http://www.ginkgobilobasource.com

and

http://www.herbalwire.com