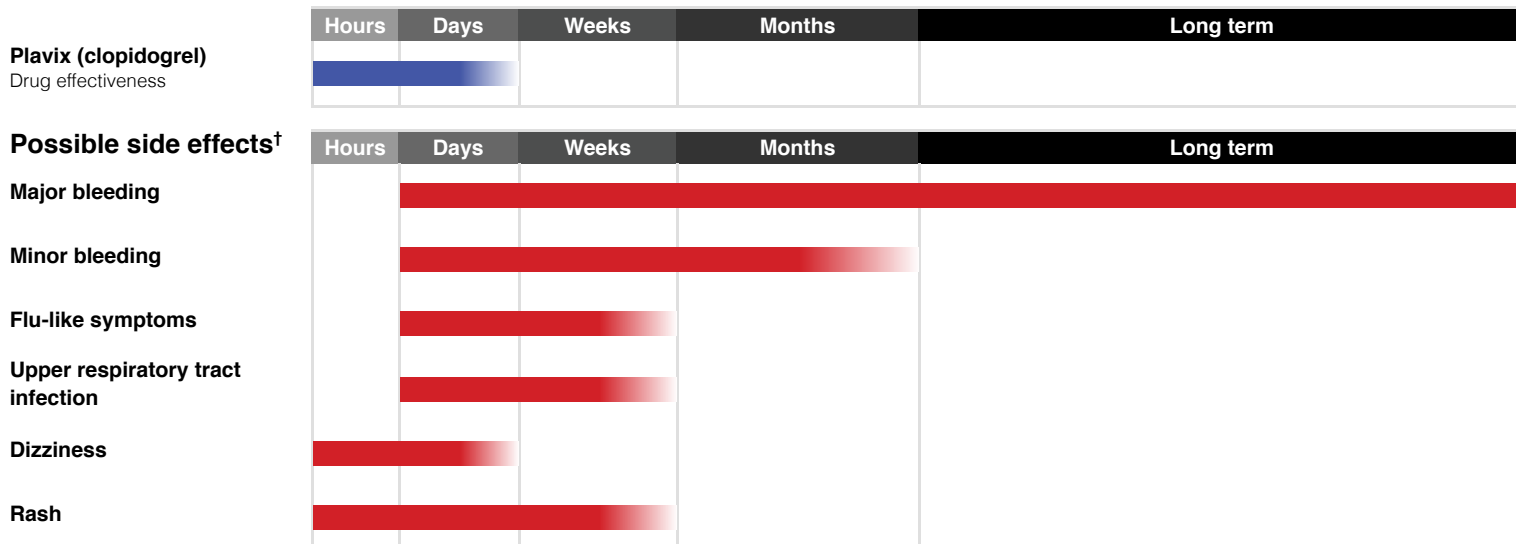


Plavix (clopidogrel) basics

Prevents blood clots. Plavix (clopidogrel) is a cheap, generically available blood thinner that protects you from clots after you've had a heart attack or surgery.

What to expect when starting

Here's when people typically experience benefits as well as some possible side effects. Your experience may be different.



† Data on frequency of side effects is not available.

Tips from pharmacists

- Thins your blood to prevent clots from forming or getting bigger.
- Can raise your risk of bleeding or bruising.
- Take this medicine exactly as told by your doctor.
- Plavix (clopidogrel) may not be safe to be taken together with some medicines and over-the-counter supplements. Don't start any new medicine without first speaking with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Let your doctor know right away if you experience a fever, weakness, or unusual bleeding and bruising.
- You should stop taking Plavix (clopidogrel) at least 5 days before any major surgeries to lower your chances of bleeding.

Risks and warnings

The FDA has identified these as possible serious or life-threatening risks with this medication. Contact your doctor if you experience any of these.

Weakened ability to prevent blood clots

Plavix (clopidogrel) may not work well for some people due to the way their bodies process it. Your doctor may have you do a genetic test to find out if Plavix (clopidogrel) is the right treatment for you. Certain medicines that reduce stomach acid, such as Prilosec or Nexium, can reduce the effectiveness of Plavix (clopidogrel) when taken together. You shouldn't start any new medicine, vitamins or supplements without first talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

Life-threatening bleeding

Plavix (clopidogrel) makes it harder for your blood to form clots so your body may not be able to stop bleeding the way it normally does. Taking the exact dose of the medicine as instructed by your doctor can lower your risk of bleeding problems. Let your doctor know right away if you get any signs of bleeding such as pink-colored urine, unusual bruising or black stools.

Unexplained bruising and purple spots on skin

This is a rare, but life-threatening condition where clots are formed in your blood vessels. It can happen as soon as within the first 2 weeks of starting Plavix (clopidogrel). If you get purple patches on your skin, a fever, headache, vision changes, and weakness that are not due to other reasons while taking this medication, go to the emergency room right away to get medical help.