

Tacrolimus for Organ Transplants

(tah crow-li-mus)

Brand names: Advagraf®, Prograf®

What it does

- helps prevent or treat rejection
- usually given with other anti-rejection medications
- suppresses your body's immune system, specifically your white blood cells, called lymphocytes (lim-fo-sights)

How to take

- Take at the same time and the same way every day.
- You can take this medication with food or on an empty stomach, but take it the same way every time.
- Swallow the pill whole. Do not crush, break or chew the pill.
- **Never eat grapefruit, pomegranate, pomelo, or their juices.** These fruits and their juices can change how this medication works.
- Prograf is usually taken every 12 hours. Advagraf is usually taken every 24 hours.

What to watch for

Most side effects either go away with time or when the dose is reduced.

Get your blood checked as directed.

Tell your transplant team if any of these side effects bother you or do not go away:

- upset stomach
- throwing up
- diarrhea (runny stool or 'poo')
- headaches
- feeling dizzy
- tremors (the shakes)
- trouble sleeping
- sunburn

While the following side effects do not happen very often, if they do, it can be serious.

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- rash, hives or skin blisters
- swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat
- very hoarse voice or sore throat
- fever over 38°C (100.5°F)
- trouble breathing
- chest pain or pressure
- very bad headache
- swelling of the hands, feet, ankles, or lower legs
- very thirsty
- pain passing urine (going 'pee') or not able to pass urine (go 'pee')
- unusual bruising or bleeding

Tacrolimus for Organ Transplants- *continued*

Late or missed dose

Missed doses can increase your chances of your body rejecting your transplanted organ.

If you miss a dose and it is **less than half the time** before you must take your next dose:

- Take the missed dose when you remember.
- Then take your next dose on schedule.

If you miss a dose and it is **more than half the time** before you must take your next dose:

- Skip the missed dose.
- Then take your next dose on schedule.

Example:

If you take this medication every 12 hours and you remember to take your medication within 6 hours of the time you were to take it, take the missed dose.

If it is more than 6 hours after the time you were to take it, skip that dose. Wait and take your next dose as scheduled.

Never take 2 doses at the same time or take any extra doses as a way of making up for a missed dose.

Keep track of the doses you miss. Note when how many were missed and when. Give this to us at your next Transplant Clinic visit or next visit to your doctor.

Other notes

- On the day you are scheduled for blood tests:
 - Write down the last time you took your medication and bring this with you.
 - **Be at the laboratory 1 hour before taking your medication.**
 - Take your medication as scheduled, unless told differently.

- Store this medication in dry, dark place at room temperature.
- If you find your stomach is upset:
 - Eat smaller meals more often during the day rather than just three meals a day.
 - Suck on hard, sugar-free candy or chew sugar-free gum.
- If you take antacids, take them 2 hours before or 4 hours after taking this medication.
- Protect yourself from infection. Wash your hands often. Try to stay away from people who have a cold, the flu, or other infections.
- Protect your skin when out in the sun. There is a greater chance of skin or other cancers with this medication.
- Always check with the Transplant Clinic team before:
 - Taking any new medications, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, natural health or herbal products.
 - Getting any vaccinations.
- For women:
 - Use birth control.
 - Plan any pregnancy long before you become pregnant. You should not take this medication if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
 - Talk to the transplant team if you want to get pregnant.

Questions?

Call the Transplant Clinic at 604-592-0922