



Tacrolimus

Information For Patient With Glomerulonephritis

Generic Name	Brand Name
Tacrolimus immediate release (ta-KROE-li-mus)	Prograf®
Tacrolimus extended release (ta-KROE-li-mus)	Advagraf®

What is Tacrolimus and why is it being recommended for me?

- Tacrolimus is used to control diseases of the immune system such as glomerulonephritis (inflammation of the kidneys).
- It works by lowering your immune system.
- It can reduce the leakage of protein from your kidneys into the urine.

How should I take Tacrolimus?

- The number of Tacrolimus pills can change so make sure you are taking the correct dose.
- Prograf® and Advagraf® are 2 different medications and are not interchangeable.
- If you are taking Prograf®, take your dose twice daily. Space doses evenly apart.
- If you are taking Advagraf®, take your dose once daily in the morning.
- If you miss a dose, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. But, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the dose you missed and take the next dose at the regular time. Do not take 2 doses at the same time.
- Take Tacrolimus with or without food, but be consistent. Take with food, if it causes upset stomach.
- Swallow capsules whole. Do not cut, crush or chew the capsules.
- Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice as they can increase Tacrolimus levels in the body.
- Avoid switching between brand name and generic Tacrolimus.

What else do I need to know before taking Tacrolimus?

- If you experience diarrhea and/or vomiting and are not able to eat or drink to the point of dehydration, stop your Tacrolimus and inform the clinic.
- Always contact the clinic before starting any new prescription and/or nonprescription medications (including vitamins and herbal products).
- Contact the clinic before receiving any vaccines. Tacrolimus may increase your chance of an infection and/or make the vaccine not work as well.

What monitoring will I need?

- Your Tacrolimus dose is based on the level in the blood. This ensures there is the right amount in your body.
- When asked to do a Tacrolimus level:
 - Go to the laboratory in the morning on the day of your requested blood work.
 - **Do not** take your Tacrolimus morning dose until **after** the blood work has been drawn.
 - For Prograf®, blood work should be drawn as close to 12 hours after your last dose as possible.
 - For Advagraf®, blood work should be drawn as close to 24 hours after your last dose as possible.
- The clinic will order regular blood tests and 24 hour urine collections to check your response to Tacrolimus and to monitor for side effects.

What are the possible side effects of Tacrolimus?

- All medications may cause side effects; however, many people only experience mild side effects or none at all. Contact the clinic if you have any concerns about the following possible side effects:

Side effects and what to do

	Side Effects
Most Common (10–20% of people experience)	Headaches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to help with headaches.
	Stomach upset, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This may improve with time as your body gets used to Tacrolimus. Taking Tacrolimus with food may help.
	Increase in blood pressure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor your blood pressure regularly. Adjustment or addition of blood pressure medication may be needed.
	Hair thinning (may be reversible)
	Tremors or shaking of hands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually related to the amount of Tacrolimus in your body. Decreases as your Tacrolimus blood level decreases.
	Changes in kidney function <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The clinic will monitor your kidney function and adjust your Tacrolimus dose as required.
	Increase in potassium level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The clinic will monitor your potassium level.
Less Common (less than 10% of people experience)	Increase in cholesterol and triglyceride levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The clinic will monitor your cholesterol and triglyceride levels.
	Increased risk of infection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tacrolimus lowers your body's ability to fight infection. Avoid close contact with people who have an infection, a cold or the flu. Wash your hands with soap often and/or use hand sanitizer. Report any signs and symptoms of infection (such as fever, chills, bad sore throat, pain with urinating, etc.) to your doctor immediately.
Rare (less than 1% of people experience)	Increase in blood sugar (diabetes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The clinic will monitor your blood sugar levels regularly. Adjustment or addition of diabetes medication may be needed.
	Cancer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tacrolimus may increase your risk of cancer. This risk is present with most medications that decrease your immune system. Avoid sunlamps and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and wear clothing and eyewear that protect you from the sun.

Questions? Contact the Clinic at: _____

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