

Renal Services

Sirolimus: Information for kidney transplant patients

What is it used for?

Sirolimus (also known as Rapamune™, or rapamycin) is an immunosuppressant drug that helps prevent rejection of your transplanted kidney.

How does it work?

It works by stopping the body's production of cells that make up part of your immune system. This dampens down your immune system to stop rejection of your new kidney.

How do I take it?

You will take your sirolimus dose once daily. It can be taken with or without food as long as you always take it the same way. It is also important to avoid eating grapefruit while taking sirolimus, as this can prevent your medication from being absorbed and working properly. If you are also taking tacrolimus or ciclosporin, you will need to take sirolimus at a different time of day.

Sirolimus is available in 0.5mg, 1mg and 2mg tablets and 1mg/1ml solution.

You will need to have regular blood tests to make sure that the levels of drug in your blood are within the correct range. Your doctor will decide on the right dose for you depending on these results and your other medication, so you may find other people taking bigger or smaller doses than you.

Are there any side effects?

- You may have an upset stomach and get diarrhoea or stomach pain.
- You may develop mouth ulcers or sore mouth.
- Your cholesterol level may increase. This will be measured at your clinic visits and treated if necessary.

Sirolimus can also lower some of your blood test results, including your white blood cells. Your doctor will monitor this in clinic.

Is there anything else I need to know?

Taking immunosuppressant medicines may mean you experience some long term effects on your health that you need to be aware of. These include an



Patient Information

increased risk of infection and an increased risk of cancer. You should follow all the general health advice given to you by the transplant team. Please read the booklet they give you carefully, as this will provide you with more information.

Do not take your dose of sirolimus on the days you come to clinic until after your blood has been taken.

You should not be vaccinated with certain 'live' vaccines whilst you are on sirolimus. The transplant team or pharmacist will be able to advise you on vaccines that are ok for you to have.

Some common drugs, for example anti-biotics, can interfere with your sirolimus levels, so it is important to let your GP, pharmacist or any other doctor that looks after you know that you are taking sirolimus. If in doubt whether medication is ok to take, then always check with a member of the transplant team, or renal pharmacist.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 7777 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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Department	Renal Services
Contact Tel	27685
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