

Renal Services

Tacrolimus: Information for kidney transplant patients

What is it used for?

Tacrolimus (also known as Adoport or Advagraf™) is an immunosuppressant drug that helps to prevent rejection of your transplanted kidney. At UHCW you will usually be prescribed the Adoport brand.

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 Adoport dose twice a day (every 12 hours).

If prescribed Advagraf you will only need to take this once a day.

You should preferably take tacrolimus on an empty stomach, as food can affect how well your body absorbs the drug.

It is also important to avoid eating grapefruit while taking tacrolimus, as this can prevent your medication from being absorbed and working properly.

Tacrolimus is available in 0.5mg, 1mg and 5mg capsules.

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 might experience a “tingly” sensation or the “shakes”.
- You may have an upset stomach (sickness or indigestion).
- You may notice your hair thinning
- You may experience headaches.
- You may notice that your blood pressure has increased when it is measured in clinic.



Patient Information

- Tacrolimus can cause an increase in your blood sugar levels:
 - If you are diabetic you may find your insulin or tablet regime will need to change.
 - Rarely, even if not previously known as diabetic, some people may need treatment with tablets (or insulin) to control their blood sugar once starting tacrolimus.

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 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 morning dose of tacrolimus on the days you come to clinic until after your blood has been taken. This is because blood levels need to be monitored 12 hours after your evening dose has been taken.

You should not be vaccinated with certain ‘live’ vaccines whilst you are on tacrolimus. 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 some antibiotics, can interfere with your tacrolimus levels, so it is important to let your GP, pharmacist or any other doctor that looks after you know that you are taking tacrolimus. If in doubt whether you should take any medication, then always check with a member of the transplant team, or renal pharmacist.

Tacrolimus is available as several different brands – the main brands are Adoport™ and Advagraf™. It is important that you always take the same brand and do not switch between them, unless advised by your transplant doctor.

Remember:

Adoport™ is taken twice a day

Advagraf™ is taken once a day

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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