

Renal Services

Tacrolimus: information for kidney transplant patients

What is Tacrolimus used for?

Tacrolimus (known as Adoport[®] or Envarsus[®]) is an immunosuppressant medicine. It helps to prevent rejection of your transplanted kidney.

You will usually be prescribed the Adoport[®] brand at University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust (UHCW).

How does Tacrolimus work?

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

How to take Tacrolimus

You will take your Adoport[®] dose twice a day (every 12 hours).

If you are prescribed Envarsus[®], you will only need to take this once a day.

You should take Tacrolimus on an empty stomach as food can affect how well your body absorbs the medicine.

It is also important to avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice while taking tacrolimus. Grapefruit and grapefruit juice can prevent Tacrolimus from being absorbed and working properly.

Adoport[®] is available in 0.5mg, 1mg and 5mg capsules.



Patient Information

You will need to have regular blood tests. This is to check that the levels of medicine in your blood are within the correct range.

Your doctor will decide on the right dose for you. This will depend on these test results and your other medicines. You may find other people take bigger or smaller doses than you.

Side effects

- You may 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.
- Tacrolimus can cause an increase in your blood sugar levels.
 - If you have diabetes, you may find your insulin or tablet regime will need to change.
 - Some people may need treatment with tablets (or insulin) to control their blood sugar. This may be needed even if you are not known to have diabetes. This is rare.

Important: long-term effects

You are taking immunosuppressant medicines. This means that you may experience long-term health effects. Long-term health effects include an increased risk of infection and cancer.

It is important that you follow the transplant team’s health advice. Please read the booklet that they give you. It provides important information that you need.

You should not be vaccinated with ‘live’ vaccines while you are on tacrolimus. The transplant team or pharmacist can advise you on vaccines that are safe for you.

Do not take your morning dose of tacrolimus on the days you come to clinic until after your blood test has been done. This is because your blood levels need to be monitored 12 hours after your evening dose has been taken.

Patient Information

Some common drugs can interfere with your tacrolimus levels. These include antibiotics. This means it is important to let your GP, pharmacist or any other doctor that provides care, know that you are taking tacrolimus. Always check with a member of the transplant team, or renal pharmacist, if you are unsure if a medicine is safe for you.

Tacrolimus is available as several different brand. The main brands are Adoport[®] and Envarsus[®].

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.**
- **Envarsus[®] is taken once a day.**

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