



London Health Sciences Centre

Multi-Organ Transplant Program

**University Hospital
Patient Medication Information
Pharmacy Services 519-663-3172**

Brand Name: Prograf®
Common Name: tacrolimus regular release

What is it?

Prograf® (tacrolimus) is a very potent immunosuppressive drug, which helps prevent your body from rejecting your transplanted organ(s). You will probably have to take it for the rest of your life. You may be taking other medications along with Prograf® to prevent rejection, such as prednisone, mycophenolate or sirolimus.

How should it be taken?

Prograf® brand of tacrolimus is taken twice a day, **every 12 hours**. You may take it either with or without food, as long as you take it the same way every day. When you go home, you may take it at whatever time is most convenient for you as long as it is at the same time **every morning** and **every evening** (for example, 8AM and 8PM). Do not open, cut, crush, or chew the capsule.

Prograf® should not be confused with Advagraf® brand of tacrolimus. They cannot be interchanged. If your medication looks different than what you have been taking, talk to your pharmacist or transplant doctor.

DO NOT take Prograf® with grapefruit or grapefruit juice. This may cause the amount of Prograf® in your blood to increase. Orange juice has no effect and is safe to drink.

Dose changes

For the first few months after your transplant, your dose of Prograf® will change often. Dose changes are based on the amount of Prograf® in your blood. The dose will vary among different people. Your transplant doctor will tell you what dose you should take. Take this medication exactly the way you are told by your transplant team.

When you leave the hospital, you will continue to have your Prograf® blood level checked periodically. When you come to the clinic for blood tests, **DO NOT** take your Prograf® dose that morning. Bring it with you and **take if after your blood is drawn**. Your doctor will tell you if you need to change your dose (for the next day) after seeing the results of your blood test.

If you miss a dose

Take it as soon as you remember, as long as it is within 6 hours of your usual time. If you remember more than 6 hours later, skip the missed dose and carry on the next day as usual. **NEVER** double the dose. It is important to remember to take this medication regularly and on time so that it can work most effectively for you. Missing too many doses can lead to rejection.

If you are sick

If you vomit within ½ hour of taking Prograf®, you should take it again. If you vomit more than ½ hour after taking your dose, it is not necessary to take another dose. If you have diarrhea for several days or continue to vomit, you should contact your transplant team. They may want to check your Prograf® blood level.

How should Prograf® (tacrolimus) be stored?

Keep your medications away from extremes of temperature (very hot or very cold). Keep them at room temperature, away from children. Do not keep medication in your vehicle. When you travel, take your medication in a carry-on bag and keep it with you at all times.

What are the side effects?

Prograf® can cause nausea, stomach discomfort, diarrhea, tremors, headaches, difficulty sleeping, flushing, numbness or tingling (especially around the mouth) and increased sensitivity to touch. Some people may also develop high blood pressure, high potassium in the blood, or slowing of kidney function. Some may develop diabetes and require medication or insulin to treat this. All anti-rejection medications can increase your risk for infections and certain types of cancers, especially skin cancer. You should report anything unusual to your transplant team.

Many of these side effects can also occur when your blood levels of Prograf® are too high, which is why it is important for your transplant team to continue to monitor your blood levels.

Other information

Prograf® is a very specialized medication and may not be readily available at your pharmacy. Be sure you always have enough on hand so you never run out.

Drug interactions

Many prescription and non-prescription medications can interact (not mix well) with Prograf®, affecting the way it works in your body. It is important to check with your doctor or pharmacist before you take any new medications, even products you buy off the shelf, to make sure it will not affect the amount Prograf® in your blood or cause more side effects. You should avoid herbal or homeopathic medications, as these may also affect how Prograf® works in your body.

Drugs used to treat high cholesterol or triglycerides may become more potent when taken with Prograf®. You should always check with your transplant team before taking these types of medications (e.g., atorvastatin, simvastatin, pravastatin, lovastatin, rosuvastatin, fenofibrate, etc.).

You should also check with your transplant team before having any vaccinations.

Some examples of medications that do not mix well with Prograf® are listed below. This is not a complete list, so you should always check with your transplant team or a pharmacist before taking any new medications not prescribed by your transplant team.

May increase Prograf®	May decrease Prograf®	May increase harm to kidneys
-diltiazem -verapamil -fluconazole/ ketoconazole/ itraconazole -erythromycin/ clarithromycin (azithromycin is safe) -cimetidine -estrogen -birth control pills -grapefruit/ grapefruit juice	-phenytoin -phenobarbital -carbamazepine -rifampin -primidone	-Aspirin -Ibuprofen and other anti-inflammatory medications