

Tacrolimus (ta-KROE-li-mus)

Information For Patient With Glomerulonephritis

Generic Name	Brand Name	Dosage form	How to take
Tacrolimus immediate release	Prograf®	0.5 mg, 1 mg and 5 mg capsules	Take TWICE daily (space doses evenly apart)
Tacrolimus extended release	Advagraf®	0.5 mg, 1 mg, 3 mg and 5 mg capsules	Take ONCE daily in the morning
Tacrolimus prolonged release	Envarsus PA®	0.75 mg, 1 mg and 4 mg tablets	Take ONCE daily in the morning (preferably 1 hour before a meal or 2 hours after a meal)

Note: The different tacrolimus products release the medication into your blood differently. These products are not the same and the instructions for dosing are not the same. Each time you pick up your Tacrolimus pills from the pharmacy, check the brand name of your medication, the appearance, and the instructions for dosing. If you notice any changes, speak to your pharmacist to make sure you have the right product.

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?

- Tacrolimus is available in different forms and there are multiple brands (e.g., Prograf®, Advagraf®, and Envarsus PA®). The instructions for dosing are different for each product (see chart above).
- Your doctor will tell you when and how many Tacrolimus pills to take per day.
- The number of Tacrolimus pills can change so make sure you are taking the correct dose.
- Take Tacrolimus at the same time(s) each day.
- Tacrolimus products can be taken with or without food, but be consistent. If it causes upset stomach, try taking it with food
- Swallow capsules or tablets whole. Do not cut, crush or chew the capsules/tablets.
- Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice as they can increase Tacrolimus levels in the body.
- Avoid switching between brand name and generic Tacrolimus products.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

- 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 to make up for a missed dose.

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.
- Some medications can affect your Tacrolimus dose. Always contact the clinic before starting any new prescription and/or nonprescription medications (including vitamins and herbal products).

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.
- Your clinic will inform you when you require a Tacrolimus level. For information about blood monitoring, your clinic can provide you with the Tacrolimus Blood Level Monitoring Information Handout or it is available on [our website](#).

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.
	Increase in cholesterol and triglyceride levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clinic will monitor your cholesterol and triglyceride levels.
Less Common (less than 10% of people experience)	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.
	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.
Rare (less than 1% of people experience)	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: _____

ORN gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the ORN GN Drug Access Task Group, the ORN GN Patient and Family Panel, and the ORN GN Priority Panel in preparing this handout. This handout is provided for informational purposes only. It is meant to supplement a discussion with your healthcare team. Please contact a pharmacist or other health care professionals if you have any further questions regarding this medication