

About your medication

TACROLIMUS

(PROGRAF® 0.5mg, 1mg, 5mg
capsules)

Other brands may be available

WHAT IS TACROLIMUS?

Tacrolimus is from a group of medications called immunosuppressive agents. It is only available with a doctor's prescription.

WHAT IS IT FOR?

It is used to prevent the body from rejecting the newly transplanted liver, kidney or other organ. It works by decreasing the immune response and stopping the body reacting to the new organ.

HOW TO TAKE THIS MEDICINE

It is important that this medication is given only as directed, and not given to other people. Tacrolimus should be given about the same time each day to keep a constant level in the blood. It should be taken about 12 hours apart and at least one hour before food, in two equal doses.

The capsules can be swallowed whole or opened and diluted with water or orange juice.

If the dose is different to the amount in the capsules, or if your child are unable to swallow the capsules, the pharmacy will provide you with a mixture.

Your doctor will require your child to have blood tests to measure the level of the medication. This is done to achieve the correct dose for your child and so reduce side effects.

WHAT TO DO IF A DOSE IS MISSED

If you miss a dose of the medication it can be given as soon as you remember. Do not take the missed dose if it is close to the next one just give the next dose as normal. **Do not double up on any doses.** If you miss more than one dose a day call your doctor.

STORING THE MEDICINE

It is important to keep tacrolimus locked away out of the reach of children. Do not keep the capsules in the bathroom, near the kitchen sink or in other damp, warm places because this may make them less effective. Store in a cool, dry place, away from heat and direct light. Do not store capsules in the refrigerator. Always leave the capsule in the foil. Capsules should be discarded one year after opening the foil packet. Write the date of opening of the foil packet on the label as a reminder. Only open one foil packet at a time.

USE OF OTHER MEDICINES

Care must be taken when using tacrolimus with some other medications. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving any prescription medicine or medicine purchased without prescription from a pharmacy, supermarket, or health food shop.

Whilst on tacrolimus, check with your doctor before your child has any vaccinations. Other household residents should not be given oral polio vaccine (SABIN) but should have inactivated polio vaccine (IPOL) if required.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about possible interactions with any over-the-counter or complementary medicines or recreational substances (e.g.alcohol).

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Avoid eating large amounts of foods rich in potassium e.g. bananas
- Do not drink grapefruit juice or eat large quantities of grapefruit unless advised by the doctor.
- Do not suddenly stop giving this medication. It should only be discontinued under the supervision of your child's doctor.
- Your child may be more sensitive to sunlight and burn more easily while taking this medicine. Reduce exposure to sunlight by wearing a hat, light loose clothing and apply SPF15 sunscreen on exposed skin areas
- Not all pharmacies will have tacrolimus in stock. Do not let your supplies run out, particularly over weekends and holiday periods.
- The RCH pharmacy may prepare special dosage forms (e.g. mixtures) if you have a prescription written by a RCH doctor. These may take some time to prepare, so ***please notify the RCH pharmacy 2-3 working days in advance.***

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Side effects can occur while taking tacrolimus. Some of these are not serious and will go away with time or after the dose has been changed. Others are more serious and require you to check with your doctor.

Less serious side effects include:

- nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, stomach cramps
- tiredness, lack of energy
- burning feeling in hands or feet
- tremor (shaking), headache
- weight loss or gain
- muscle cramps, tenderness or weakness
- sleeping difficulties
- feeling sad

More Serious (Contact doctor as soon as possible if any of the following occur):

- fever, constant "flu-like" symptoms
- unusual bleeding or bruising on body
- new lumps, moles, changes in existing moles, skin rash or hives
- swelling of eyelids, hands or feet due to excess fluid
- change in amount of urine passed or in the number of times per day, pain on urinating
- yellowing of skin and/or eyes
- severe pain or tenderness in the stomach or abdomen
- vomiting blood or material that looks like coffee grounds; black sticky bowel motions or bloody diarrhoea
- visual hallucinations, buzzing or ringing in the ears
- seizures (fits).

Allergic reaction (Stop medicine and see doctor immediately):

- skin rash, itching or hives, swollen mouth or lips, wheezing or difficulty breathing

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT



***Your Child's Doctor via the RCH Switchboard
on 03 9345 5522***

OR

***Pharmacy Department on 03 9345 5492
IN CASE OF POISONING OR OVERDOSE CONTACT
POISONS INFORMATION CENTRE 13 11 26
(24 hour service)***

This leaflet answers some common questions about your child's medicine. It does not contain all available information. It does not take the place of talking to your child's doctor or pharmacist. The leaflet may differ from information in the manufacturer's Consumer Medicine Information. The information in this leaflet reflects the usage of medicine under medical supervision by patients of The Royal Children's Hospital. Medicine may be used in children in different ways or for different reasons than in adults - for more information see the leaflet "[Medicines for Children](#)". This leaflet includes information current at the time of review of the document – OCTOBER 2010.
