

# Tacrolimus

Ta-CROW-lim-us  
Advagraf®, Prograf®

<http://Rheuminfo.com>  
your rheumatology resource

## How to use this medication

### What is it



Tacrolimus is a medication used to treat rheumatic diseases like lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. While taking this medicine it is important to have blood tests done and see your doctor on a regular basis.

### Take it twice a day



The normal dose of tacrolimus is based on the disease being treated and your body weight. The dose in rheumatoid arthritis is 3 mg taken once a day.

### Be patient



It will take some time for the tacrolimus to work. It is important for you to keep taking the medicine.

## What you need to do

### Stop if you have an infection



Tacrolimus can make it harder for you to fight off infections. Stop the medicine and call your doctor if:

1. You develop a fever
2. You think you have an infection
3. You are given antibiotics to treat an infection

### Get regular blood tests



Have your blood tested **regularly**. This is important to make sure tacrolimus isn't affecting your blood counts, blood sugars, potassium levels, or kidney function.

### Get your blood pressure checked



Tacrolimus can cause your blood pressure to rise. It is important to have your blood pressure checked on a regular basis.

### Drug interactions



There are several prescription medications that are not safe to take with tacrolimus. Discuss any new medication with your doctor.

## Side effects & important facts

### Nausea & feeling unwell



Some people can feel sick to their stomach, bloated, have stomach pain, or develop diarrhea when they take tacrolimus. Please let your doctor know if this happens.

### Kidneys



Tacrolimus can affect your kidneys. Your kidneys are watched through regular blood testing.

### Brain



Tacrolimus can rarely be harmful to the brain and nerves. Let your doctor know if you develop a tremor, headache, change in your vision, seizures, tingling in the fingers, toes, tip of the nose, tongue, or lips, or any confusion.

### Other side effects

#### Tacrolimus can cause other side effects:

- Tiredness
- Weakness and muscle cramps
- Weight loss
- Increased blood sugars

### Heart



Tacrolimus can rarely affect the heart rhythm. Let your doctor know if you have any known heart problems. This can be made worse if combined with certain medications.

### Pregnancy & Breastfeeding



Tacrolimus is not normally taken during pregnancy or breastfeeding. If you become pregnant or are planning to become pregnant please let your doctor know.

### Cancer



When used for long periods of time, tacrolimus may be associated with a small risk of lymphoma and skin cancer.

## When should I call my doctor

### Please call if you need to stop

- If you feel sick and want to stop
- If you are concerned about any side effects
- If you want to or have already stopped the medicine



### Other reasons to call your doctor:



New high blood pressure



Fever or think you have an infection



Pregnant or planning pregnancy



Severe new headache, change in vision, or confusion



If you are having surgery