



Sirolimus Medication Information

What is sirolimus?

Sirolimus is an immunosuppressive medication the class known as antiproliferatives. This drug is used to suppress your immune system so your body does not reject your transplanted organ. Sirolimus is not started in the immediate post transplant period. Patients are sometimes switched to sirolimus if they do not tolerate other classes of immunosuppressive medications.

Are there other names for sirolimus?

Yes, sirolimus may be referred to by its brand name which is Rapamune[®] or by its shorter abbreviated name Rapa.

Is sirolimus available in a generic formulation or any other formulation that I should be aware of?

There is not a generic formulation of Rapamune[®] available on the market yet nor are there any other similar formulations.

How do I take sirolimus?

Follow your physician's instructions carefully. Sirolimus should be taken at the same time each day to maintain a steady blood level. Most patients take it in the morning between 7 and 9 am. It may be taken on an empty stomach or with food to reduce stomach irritation. The most important thing to remember is to take it the same way everyday, either with or without food as the food can affect the drugs absorption. The tablets should be swallowed whole and not crushed or chewed. There is an oral solution available for people who need very low doses or those who can not swallow the tablets. The oral solution is drawn into an oral syringe from the bottle. You should empty the syringe into a glass or plastic cup containing at least 2 ounces (1/4 cup, 60 mL) of water or orange juice, stir vigorously for one (1) minute and drink immediately. Refill the container with at least 4 ounces (1/2 cup, 120 mL) of water or orange juice, stir vigorously again and drink the rinse solution. Apple juice, grapefruit juice, or other liquids are NOT to be used. Only glass or plastic cups should be used to dilute the oral solution. Store your bottle of Rapamune[®] oral solution in the refrigerator. If you need to pre-draw a dose you can store one dose in the oral syringe outside of the refrigerator for 24 hours only.

What do I do if I missed a dose or I have a late clinic appointment?

Do not take two doses of sirolimus within 12 hours of each other. If you have a late clinic appointment and you haven't taken your sirolimus dose you may take it later that afternoon, just be sure to take your next dose at least 12 hours later.

Does sirolimus interact with any foods or beverages?

Do not eat grapefruits, grapefruit juice or any soda (Fresca) or fruit juice blend that contains grapefruit juice. Grapefruit can increase your levels of sirolimus to a potentially toxic level.

Please direct your medication questions to
your transplant coordinator or transplant pharmacist.



Does sirolimus interact with other drugs?

Drug interactions can occur when one drug affects the levels of another drug, it can cause the levels to either go up or down. Always check with your transplant team before starting any new medications.

Interactions with sirolimus may occur with the following:

- anti-convulsants (Dilantin, carbamazepine, phenobarbital)
- antibiotics (erythromycin, metronidazole)
- anti-fungals (Diflucan, Sporanox, Nizoral, Vfend)
- anti-nausea or prokinetics (Reglan)
- calcium channel blockers (Cardizem, Calan)
- HIV medications (ritonavir, nelfinavir, saquinavir)
- birth control pills

What if I become pregnant, or are considering pregnancy or breast-feeding?

Some drugs are avoided during pregnancy due to the potential harm they may have on the unborn baby. The FDA has a grading system that lets you know how safe a drug is for your unborn child. It ranks drugs from A, where medical studies show no evidence for danger to the fetus or mother, to B, C, D and X, where the medical evidence indicates that the risk to the fetus outweighs any benefit to the mother. Mycophenolate is ranked C. If you are planning on becoming pregnant or become pregnant while on Rapamune[®] let your doctor know immediately. Most patients are taken off Rapamune[®] and put on cyclosporine or tacrolimus because there is more experience with the safety of these drug in pregnancy. Always consult your physician before taking any drug during or when planning pregnancy as your immunosuppression regimen may have to be changed during this time.

Are there other precautions that I need to be concerned about while taking sirolimus?

When you take medications that suppress your immune system you are at an increased risk of infection. Report promptly to your physician any indication of infection such as fever, sore throat, swollen glands, sores or lumps in the skin, abnormal bleeding or bruising. Avoid friends and family member that are sick, ask them to wear a mask in your presence. Avoid live vaccines while taking this drug and avoid contact with individuals who have recently taken the oral poliovirus vaccine or the live (nasal) seasonal or H1N1 flu vaccine. Be sure to inform your physician if you have had a recent infection, especially chicken pox or shingles. Long term use of immunosuppressive medications may place you at a higher risk of developing certain types of cancers such as skin cancer, cervical cancer and lymphoma (lymph node cancer).

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your transplant coordinator or transplant pharmacist.



How long will I have to take sirolimus?

You will likely be on this immunosuppressant or one similar to it for as long as your transplanted organ is functioning. Over time, there may be some changes to the types of immunosuppressants you will take. Make sure your transplant team is aware of any changes made to this medication by other doctors.

What kind of side effects could I have while taking sirolimus?

Side effects can occur with any drug, even over-the-counter medications. Some of these side effects are mild where as other can be more severe. Minor reactions may resolve on their own but if they persist, contact your physician. For major reactions, you should contact your physician immediately.

For sirolimus, the following are the observed side effects:

Minor:

- Bone or joint pain
- Headache
- Swelling in your legs

Major:

- fever
- sore throat
- nausea/vomiting
- diarrhea
- low white blood count
- low platelet count
- high blood pressure
- anemia
- high triglycerides
- mouth ulcers
- pneumonia
- increased liver function tests

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