

MEDICATIONS

The key to maintaining a successful transplant is taking the medications you will need for the rest of your life. Initially it may seem a little overwhelming, but in time you will become very comfortable with the routine. Your nurse will give you a medication sheet that you can use to keep track of your different medications and when you need to take them. These sheets will make it easier for you to take your medications and learn your medication routine.

It is very important that you learn the names of your medicines, the reasons you are taking them, the dose you take, and the side effects you may experience.

A few guidelines to follow:

- **ALWAYS** take your medicine at the same time everyday.
- **NEVER** skip a dose. If you accidentally miss a dose, call your Transplant Team. “☎️”
- **DO NOT** stop taking your medications for any reason without consulting your Transplant Team.
- **CALL** your Transplant Team if you experience vomiting, diarrhea, or any of the possible side effects from the medications. “☎️”
- **NEVER** take medications other than those prescribed by your Transplant Team, including over-the-counter medicines or those prescribed by other physicians, without first calling your coordinator. “☎️”

REMEMBER THAT NOT TAKING MEDICATIONS AS PRESCRIBED IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON REASONS FOR TRANSPLANT FAILURE!

Therefore, be very careful when taking your medications. Call your Transplant Team with any questions or concerns – no matter how small they seem. “☎️”

The following is a list of common post-transplant medications by category. Your nurse will check off the medicines that you will be taking.

IMMUNOSUPPRESSANTS

Neoral

Purpose:

To suppress your immune system (the system of the body that fights off infection) in order to prevent rejection of your transplant by your body

ALWAYS take your Neoral dose at the same time each day.

Avoid drinking grapefruit juice

Possible side effects:

- Headaches
- Increased blood pressure (Medication to lower your blood pressure may be prescribed.)
- Trembling or shaky hands
- Cramping (Drink tonic water before going to bed.)
- Increased hair growth (Use a hair removal product.)
- Overgrowth of your gums (Get regular dental checkups.)

MEDICATIONS

- Decreased kidney function (Blood will be drawn to monitor your liver and kidney function.)

□ Prograf (Tacrolimus)

Purpose:

To suppress your immune system (the system of the body that fights off infection) in order to prevent rejection of your transplant by your body

ALWAYS take your Prograf dose at the same time each day.

Possible side effects:

- Increased blood pressure (Medication to lower your blood pressure may be prescribed.)
- Trembling or shaky hands
- Headaches (Take Tylenol)
- Sleeplessness
- Diarrhea
- High potassium levels (possibly requiring changes in diet)
- Itching
- Decreased kidney function (Blood will be drawn to monitor your liver and kidney function.)
- Increased blood sugar

□ Prednisone

Purpose:

To suppress your immune system (the system of the body that fights off infection) in order to prevent rejection of your transplant by your body

When your doctor takes you off Prednisone, the dosage must gradually be decreased according to your doctor's instructions.

Possible side effects:

- Swelling of the face, hands, ankles (Limit salt intake, notify the Transplant Team of a weight gain of greater than two pounds per day over two consecutive days.)
- Increased appetite (You may have to limit snacks and weigh yourself regularly.)
- Increased blood sugar (You may need to take Insulin to control your blood sugar)
- Muscle weakness and brittle bones (Avoid contact sports. Participate in a supervised exercise program.)
- Stomach irritation (Take Prednisone on a full stomach. Antacids will be ordered to protect your stomach.)
- Easy bruising
- Acne
- Increased hair growth
- Skin irritation and sensitivity to sun (Use sunscreen SPF30 or greater).

MEDICATIONS

☐ Cellcept (Mycophenolate Mofetil)

Purpose:

To suppress your immune system (the system of the body that fights off infection) in order to prevent rejection of your transplant by your body

ALWAYS take Cellcept on an empty stomach.

DO NOT take an antacid at the same time.

Possible side effects:

- Diarrhea, nausea, vomiting
- Low white-blood-cell count (Your blood counts will be monitored.)

MEDICATIONS TO PREVENT INFECTIONS

☐ Valcyte (Valgancyclovir) Cytovene (Gancyclovir)

Purpose:

To fight viral infections such as herpes simplex and cytomegalovirus

Possible side effects:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Headache
- Rash (Call your Transplant Team) ☎
- Low white blood cells
- Anemia (low red blood cells)
- Low platelet Count

☐ Septra TMP-SMZ (Bactrim)

Purpose:

To protect you against a certain type of lung infection

Possible side effects:

- Rash (Call your Transplant Team) ☎
- Nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite
- Skin irritation and sensitivity to the sun (use sunscreen SPF30 or greater.)

☐ Nystatin Liquid Suspension or Mycelex Troche

Purpose:

To prevent yeast or fungus infections in your mouth. The liquid must be swished in your mouth and swallowed.

MEDICATIONS

Possible side effects:

- Nausea,
- Diarrhea

ANTACIDS

Mylanta

Purpose:

To coat your stomach and protect it against irritation

Possible side effects:

- Diarrhea

Amphogel

Purpose:

To coat your stomach and protect it against irritation

Possible side effects:

- Constipation

NOTE: *Alternate between Mylanta and Amphogel to keep bowels regular.*

Nexium, Prevacid, Protonix

One of these medicines may be prescribed for you.

Purpose:

*To decrease your stomach's production of acid and protect it against irritation and formation of ulcers.
Take this drug before meals.*

Possible side effects:

- Headache, dizziness
- Diarrhea
- Nausea, Vomiting

ANTI-HYPERTENSIVES

Vasotec (enalapril)

— Norvasc (amlodipine)

Purpose:

To decrease your blood pressure

Possible side effects:

- Headache, fatigue
- Low blood pressure, nausea
- Swelling of legs
- Dizziness or lightheadedness (notify your transplant team) 📞

MEDICATIONS

NOTE: *If you are taking any medication that comes in a capsule labeled “Long Acting” or “Sustained Release” (XL, SR). DO NOT break the capsule open or cut the tablet in half to reach your prescribed dose. A new capsule or tablet must be ordered. IF you have difficulty in swallowing the capsule or tablet, DO NOT crush it or break it – CALL YOUR TRANSPLANT TEAM. 📞*

MISCELLANEOUS MEDICATIONS

Lasix (Furosemide)

Purpose:

Diuretic (water pill) to increase urine output and reduce edema (swelling caused by fluid build-up)

Possible side effects:

- Dizziness
- Low blood pressure
- Nausea
- Muscle cramps

Aldactone (Spironolactone)

Purpose:

Diuretic (water pill) to increase urine output and reduce edema (swelling caused by fluid build-up)

Possible side effects:

- Dizziness
- Headache
- Abdominal cramps
- Diarrhea
- High potassium levels

Cardizem (diltiazem)

Purpose:

To increase the level of Neoral in your blood.

(Note that often people take this medicine to lower their heart rate and blood pressure.)

Possible side effects:

- Headache
- Feeling flushed or dizzy
- Decreased blood pressure

NOTE: *If you are taking any medication that comes in a capsule labeled “Long Acting” or “Sustained Release” (XL, SR). DO NOT break the capsule open or cut the tablet in half to reach your prescribed dose. A new capsule or tablet must be ordered. IF you have difficulty in*

MEDICATIONS

swallowing the capsule or tablet, DO NOT crush it or break it – CALL YOUR TRANSPLANT TEAM. 📞

MEDICATIONS

☐ Interferon (Intron), Pegasus

Purpose:

An injection to treat chronic hepatitis

Possible side effects:

- Flu-like symptoms
- Weight loss
- Lethargy
- Depression
- Nausea
- Low white blood cell count

☐ Ribavirin (Virazole) (Copegus) (Rebetrol)

Purpose:

An antiviral drug to treat chronic hepatitis

Possible side effects:

- Anemia
- Low blood pressure
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Depression

☐ Epogen (Epoetin), Aranesp (Darbepoetin)

Purpose:

An injection to treat anemia (low red blood cell count)

Possible side effects:

- Headache
- High blood pressure
- Joint pain

☐ Epivir (Lamivudine)

Purpose:

An antiviral drug to treat hepatitis B

Possible side effects:

- Headache, Nausea
- Fatigue
- Fever

MEDICATIONS

☐ Neupogen (Filgrastin)

Purpose:

An injection to treat neutropenia (low white-blood-cell count)

Possible side effects:

- Headache
- Fever
- Weakness
- Fatigue
- Bone pain
- Nausea/vomiting

☐ Adefovir (Hepsera)

Purpose:

An antiviral drug to treat hepatitis B

Possible side effects:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Elevated Creatinine

OUTPATIENT

☐ HBIG (Hepatitis B Immunoglobulin)

Purpose:

An IV infusion used to protect you from recurrent (repeated) hepatitis B

Possible side effects:

- Tenderness to IV Site
- Chills
- Fever

If the reason for your transplant was Hepatitis B, you will require monthly labs to determine when you will need this infusion. The transplant coordinator will call you when it is time for you to have an infusion either at home or in the hospital.