



# London Health Sciences Centre

## Multi-Organ Transplant Program

**University Hospital  
Patient Medication Information  
Pharmacy Services 519-663-3172**

---

**Brand Name:** Rapamune®  
**Common Names:** sirolimus, rapamycin

### **What is it?**

Sirolimus is an immunosuppressive medication that is used to prevent rejection of transplanted organs. You may be taking other anti-rejection medications along with sirolimus.

### **How should it be taken?**

Sirolimus is usually taken once a day. You should take it at the same time every day, for example in the morning. You may take it either with or without food; however, you should be consistent (eg: always with food or always on an empty stomach).

DO NOT take sirolimus with grapefruit or grapefruit juice as this may cause your blood levels of sirolimus to increase. Other juices, including orange juice, have no effect on sirolimus blood levels.

Sirolimus is available as a tablet or a liquid. If you are using the liquid form, your pharmacist will show you how to take it.

### **Dose changes**

Your dose of sirolimus may change often after your transplant. Dose changes are based on the amount of sirolimus in your blood or if you are experiencing any side effects from the medication. The dose will vary among different people. Your doctor will tell you what dose you should take.

When you leave the hospital, you will continue to have your sirolimus blood level measured when you come to clinic. On clinic days, DO NOT take sirolimus until AFTER you have had your bloodwork taken. You should bring it with you to the clinic and take it after having your blood drawn.

### **If you miss a dose**

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and carry on with your usual dose. Do not double the dose to catch up.

### **If you are sick**

If you vomit within ½ hour of taking sirolimus, you should take it again. If you vomit more than ½ hour after taking sirolimus, it is not necessary to take another dose. If you have diarrhea for several days or continue to vomit, you should contact your transplant team.

## Side effects

Sirolimus may cause nausea, diarrhea, tremors, dizziness, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and triglycerides, unusual heartbeat, infections, acne, excess hair growth, anemia, unusual bleeding or bruising, certain types of cancers (eg: skin cancer) or mouth sores. You should rinse your mouth with water several times after taking sirolimus as this may help prevent mouth sores.

Report any signs of infection such as fevers, chills, sore throat, white patches in your mouth or other mouth sores, or changes in vaginal discharge to your transplant team. Also report any unusual lumps or swollen glands, unusual swelling, sweating at night, or unexpected weight loss.

Women taking sirolimus should talk to their transplant team before becoming pregnant as sirolimus may be harmful to the unborn baby.

## Drug interactions

Several medications do not mix well with sirolimus and may affect the level of sirolimus in your blood. You should avoid these medications unless your transplant team tells you it is okay.

### Medications that increase your sirolimus blood level

diltiazem, verapamil  
fluconazole, itraconazole, ketoconazole  
erythromycin, clarithromycin  
cimetidine  
grapefruit, grapefruit juice

### Medications that decrease your sirolimus blood level

phenytoin, phenobarbital, carbamazepine  
rifampin

Drugs that are used to treat high cholesterol and triglycerides may become more potent when taken with sirolimus. You should always check with your transplant team before taking these types of medications (eg: atorvastatin, simvastatin, pravastatin, lovastatin, rosuvastatin, fenofibrate etc.).

You should also check with your transplant team before having any vaccinations. Do not use herbal medications while taking any anti-rejection medications. You should also avoid using non-prescription (“over the counter”) medications.

## Other information

Store your medication at room temperature, away from excessive heat and humidity. Sirolimus is a very specialized drug and may not be readily available at every pharmacy. Be sure you always have enough on hand so you never run out.