



# AZATHIOPRINE Generic Name



Brand Names: Azasan, Imuran

## WHAT IS IT?

Azathioprine is a drug used to treat certain autoimmune conditions (diseases where the body's natural defense system attacks itself), such as systemic lupus erythematosus, inflammatory bowel disease, vasculitis, rheumatoid arthritis, and other inflammatory conditions. Azathioprine suppresses the immune system by interfering with the creation of DNA molecules that cause inflammation.

To reduce the risk of side effects, azathioprine should be taken with a meal. Your doctor may start you at a low dose and gradually increase the dose overtime, until you feel better. It may take between 8-12 weeks before you notice improvements in your arthritis signs and symptoms.

## DO's

- Take this medication with a meal
- Drink plenty of fluids daily
- Limit intake of alcoholic beverages; tell your doctor if you have a history of alcohol misuse, hepatitis, yellow jaundice, or liver disease.
- Check blood work every 4-8 weeks to monitor blood counts
- Tell your doctor if you are taking any other medications (prescription and non-prescription) including: birth control pills, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

## DON'Ts

- Do not use if you are pregnant, or are trying to become pregnant
- Do not use if your body is fighting off an infection
- Do not use if you excessively drink alcohol
- Do not use if you are experiencing an allergic reaction to the drug

## POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS

The most common side effects involve the gastrointestinal tract (GI) which includes the stomach, intestines, liver, and pancreas. Azathioprine can lower the number of infection-fighting white blood cells.



## DOSING

**50 mg taken 1-3 times daily** Azathioprine is taken orally, in a daily dose with food. Some find that splitting the dose eases gastrointestinal side effects.

## MY DOSE: \_\_\_\_\_ mg

I will take \_\_\_\_\_ pills orally, \_\_\_\_\_ a day. If I experience an upset stomach I will take \_\_\_\_\_ pills in the morning, \_\_\_\_\_ in the afternoon, and \_\_\_\_\_ pills in the evening, **daily**.