

# Azathioprine

[Aye-za-TH-EYE-oh-prin]

Imuran®

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

## How to use this medication

### What is it



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

### Take it every a day



The normal dose of azathioprine is between 50 and 200 mg per day. The dose is based on your weight. Azathioprine is available as 50 mg tablets.

### Be patient



It will take 6 to 12 weeks for the azathioprine to work. It is important for you to keep taking the medicine.

## What you need to do

### Watch how much alcohol you drink



Drinking alcohol while taking azathioprine can harm your liver. It is best to limit or avoid alcohol all together.

### Stop if you have an infection



Azathioprine can make it harder for you to fight infections. It is best to stop taking it if you have a fever or think you have an infection. Phone your doctor for advice.

### Get regular blood tests



Have your blood tested **regularly**. This is important to make sure azathioprine isn't affecting your liver or blood counts.

### Drug interactions



You must not take a medicine for gout called **ALLOPURINOL** while taking azathioprine.

## Side effects & important facts

### Nausea & feeling unwell



Some people can feel sick to their stomach or develop diarrhea when they take azathioprine. Please let your doctor know if this happens.

### Rash



Azathioprine can rarely cause a rash. Let your doctor know if you develop a rash while taking azathioprine.

### Hair loss



Azathioprine can rarely cause thinning of the hair. Let your doctor know if this becomes a problem.

### Pregnancy



Azathioprine can be used safely in pregnancy and breastfeeding. If you become pregnant or are planning to become pregnant please let your doctor know.

### Cancer



When used for long periods of time, azathioprine may be associated with a small increased risk of skin or blood cancers.

## 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:



Nausea or Diarrhea



Fever or think you have an infection



Rash



Stomach pain or notice yellowing of the skin



If you are having surgery

## Other important information

### Stopping azathioprine



You can simply stop taking azathioprine. You do not need to wean off it.