

**Package leaflet:
Information for the user**

**Azathioprine tablets 50 mg
azathioprine**

Read all of this leaflet carefully before you start taking this medicine because it contains important information for you.

- Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.
- If you have any further questions, ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- This medicine has been prescribed for you only.
- Do not pass it on to others. It may harm them, even if their signs of illness are the same as yours.
- If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. See section 4.

What is in this leaflet:

1. What azathioprine tablets are and what they are used for
2. What you need to know before you take azathioprine tablets
3. How to take azathioprine tablets
4. Possible side effects
5. How to store azathioprine tablets
6. Contents of the pack and other information

1. What azathioprine tablets are and what they are used for

Azathioprine tablets contain the active substance azathioprine. They belong to a group of medicines called immunosuppressive. This means that they reduce the strength of your immune system.

Azathioprine tablets may be used to help your body accept an organ transplant, such as a new kidney, heart or liver, or to treat some diseases where your immune system is reacting against your own body (autoimmune diseases).

Autoimmune diseases may include:

- severe rheumatoid arthritis (a disease where the immune system attacks cells lining the joints causing swelling, pain, stiffness of the joints),
- systemic lupus erythematosus (a disease where the immune system attacks many of the body's organs and tissues, including skin, joints, kidneys, brain, and other organs causing severe fatigue, fever, stiffness and joint pain),
- dermatomyositis and polymyositis (a group of diseases causing inflammation of the muscles, muscle weakness and skin rash),
- auto-immune chronic active hepatitis (a disease in which the immune system attacks liver cells causing liver inflammation, fatigue, muscle aches, yellowing of the skin and fever),
- pemphigus vulgaris (a disease in which the immune system attacks skin cells causing severe blistering of the skin, mouth, nose, throat and genitals),
- polyarteritis nodosa (a rare disease that causes inflammation of the blood vessels),
- auto-immune haemolytic anaemia (a serious blood disorder where the body destroys red blood cells quicker than it can produce them, with symptoms of weakness and shortness of breath),
- chronic refractory idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (a condition with low platelet counts, that can cause easy or excessive bruising and bleeding).

Azathioprine tablets may also be used to treat inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis). Your doctor has chosen this medicine to suit you and your condition.

Azathioprine tablets may be used on its own, but it is more often used in combination with other medicines.

2. What you need to know before you take azathioprine tablets

This product may cause you to experience abnormally coloured urine, such as bright yellow urine. Although bright yellow urine is generally not concerning, you should discuss any change in the colour of your urine – including other discoloration's or darkening – with your doctor, as this may indicate kidney or liver problems.

Do not take azathioprine tablets if you:

- if you are allergic to azathioprine tablets or any of the other ingredients of this medicine (listed in section 6)
- if you are allergic to mercaptopurine (a medicine which is similar to azathioprine the active substance contained in azathioprine tablets)

Warnings and precautions

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking azathioprine tablets:

- if you have recently received, or are due to receive, a vaccination (vaccine). If you take azathioprine tablets, you should not have a live organism vaccine (for example; flu vaccine, measles vaccine, BCG vaccine, etc.) until advised it is safe to do so by your doctor. This is because some vaccines may give you an infection if you receive them while you are taking azathioprine tablets
- if you have a genetic condition known as Lesch-Nyhan Syndrome. This is a rare condition that runs in families caused by a lack of something called HPRT or 'hypoxanthine - guanine- phosphoribosyltransferase'.
- if you have liver or kidney problems if you have a genetic condition called TPMT deficiency (where your body produces too little of an enzyme called thiopurine methyltransferase)
- if you have ever had chickenpox or shingles
- if you have had hepatitis B (a liver disease caused by a virus)
- if you are going to have an operation (this is because medicines including tubocurarine, or succinylcholine used as muscle relaxants during operations may interact with azathioprine tablets. You should inform your anaesthesiologist of your treatment with azathioprine tablets prior to surgery.

If you are not sure if any of the above applies to you, talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist before taking azathioprine tablets. Your doctor will want to take regular blood samples while you are taking azathioprine tablets, to check for any changes (see section 3 "How to take azathioprine tablets).

The frequency of your blood tests will usually decrease the longer you continue to take azathioprine tablets.

If you are receiving immunosuppressive therapy, taking azathioprine tablets could put you at greater risk of:

- tumours, including skin cancer. Therefore, when taking azathioprine tablets, avoid excessive exposure to sunlight, wear protective clothing and use protective sunscreen with a high protection factor.
- lymphoproliferative disorders
 - treatment with azathioprine tablets increases your risk of getting a type of cancer called lymphoproliferative disorder. With treatment regimen containing multiple immunosuppressants (including thiopurines), this may lead to death.
 - a combination of multiple immunosuppressants, given concomitantly increases the risk of disorders of the lymph system due to a viral infection (Epstein-Barr virus (EBV)-associated lymphoproliferative disorders).
- developing a serious condition called Macrophage Activation Syndrome (excessive activation of white blood cells associated with inflammation), which usually occurs in people who have certain types of arthritis, severe chickenpox or shingles infection.
- Therefore, when taking azathioprine tablets, avoid contact with people who have chickenpox or shingles.
- a previous hepatitis B infection becoming active again
- other infections such as PML (Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy) which is an opportunistic infection. If you experience any signs of infection, please contact your doctor (see section 4 "Possible side effects").

Other medicines and azathioprine tablets

Tell your doctor if you are taking, have recently taken or might take any other medicines. This is because azathioprine tablets can affect the way some medicines work. Also, some other medicines can affect the way azathioprine works. In particular tell your doctor if you are taking, or are planning to take:

- ribavirin (used to treat viral infections)
- methotrexate (mainly used to treat cancers)
- allopurinol, oxipurinol, thiopurinol or other xanthine oxidase inhibitors, such as febuxostat (mainly used to treat gout)
- penicillamine (mainly used in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis)
- ACE inhibitor (mainly used to treat high blood pressure - hypertension)
- anticoagulants such as warfarin or acenocoumarol (used to prevent blood clots)
- cimetidine (used to treat stomach ulcers and indigestion)
- indomethacin (used as a pain killer and anti-inflammatory)
- cytostatic drugs (drugs used to treat various types of cancer)
- aminosalicylates e.g. olsalazine, mesalazine or sulfasalazine (mainly used in the treatment of ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease)
- co-trimoxazole (an antibiotic, used to treat infections caused by bacteria)
- infliximab (mainly used in the treatment of ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease)
- Before a surgical procedure tell the anesthesiologist that you are taking azathioprine because muscle relaxants used during anesthesia may interact with azathioprine

If you are not sure if any of the above applies to you, talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking azathioprine tablets.

Having vaccines while you are taking azathioprine tablets

If you are due to receive a vaccination (vaccine) speak to your doctor or nurse before you do so. If you take azathioprine tablets, you should not have a live vaccine (for example; flu vaccine, measles vaccine, BCG vaccine, etc.) until advised it is safe to do so by your doctor. This is because some vaccines may give you an infection if you receive them while you are taking azathioprine tablets.

Azathioprine tablets with food and drink

You should take your medicine at least 1 hour before or 2 hours after having milk or dairy products.

Pregnancy, breast-feeding and fertility

If you are pregnant or breast-feeding, think you may be pregnant or are planning to become pregnant, ask your doctor for advice before taking this medicine.

Pregnancy

Reliable contraceptive precautions must be taken to avoid pregnancy whilst you or your partner is taking azathioprine tablets. If you are pregnant your doctor will carefully consider whether you should take this medicine, based on the risks and benefits of treatment

Breast-feeding

Small amounts of azathioprine may pass into the breast milk. It is recommended that women receiving azathioprine should avoid breastfeeding unless the benefits outweighs the potential risks to the child. Ask your doctor for advice before breastfeeding.

Fertility

The effects of azathioprine tablets on fertility are not known.

Driving and using machines

Azathioprine tablets are not known to affect your ability to drive or use machinery. If you experience any side effect from this medicine, you may not be able to drive or operate machinery.

Azathioprine tablets contain lactose

Azathioprine tablets contain lactose monohydrate. If you have been told by your doctor that you have intolerance to some sugars, contact your doctor before taking this medicinal product.

Azathioprine tablets contain sodium

This medicine contains less than 1 mmol sodium (23 mg) per tablet, i.e. is essentially 'sodium-free'.

3. How to take azathioprine tablets

Always take this medicine exactly as your doctor or pharmacist has told you. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

The quantity of azathioprine tablets taken may

Dimension : 150 x 460 mm

FRONT SIDE

Font Name: Arial
Minimum Font Size: 8 pt

ARTWORK DETAIL LABEL

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Product	Azathioprine Tablets - 50 mg		
Buyer/Country	Strides Pharma UK Ltd.	Component	Pack Insert
Dimension	150 x 460 mm	Pack	--
New Item Code	1047556	Old Item Code	1047444
Colour Shades	██████ BLACK	No. of Colours	1

Change Control No.	PC-TSG/2022/030 - Record Number: 335239	Artwork Version	14.1
Design/Style	Front & Back Printing. To be supplied in the folded size of 150 x 230 mm		
Substrate	60 GSM Paper.		
Special Instructions	Printing clarity to be clear & sharp.		
Autocartonator Requirements	Pack insert supply should be as per auto-cartonator. Refer auto-cartonator drawing for instructions.		

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vary from patient to patient and will be prescribed by your doctor. The dose depends on the condition for which you are being treated.

You can take azathioprine tablets with food or on an empty stomach but the choice of method should be consistent from day to day. Some patients feel nausea (sick) when first given azathioprine tablets, this may be relieved by taking the tablets after food.

- When you take azathioprine tablets, your doctor will take regular blood tests. This is to check the number and type of cells in your blood, and to ensure your liver is working correctly
- Your doctor may also ask for other blood and urine tests to monitor how your kidneys are working and to measure uric acid levels. Uric acid is a natural substance made in your body and levels of uric acid can rise while you are taking azathioprine tablets. High levels of uric acid may damage your kidneys

Your doctor may sometimes change your dose of azathioprine tablets as a result of these tests.

Swallow your tablets whole. Do not chew the tablets. The tablets should not be broken or crushed.

It is important that carers are aware of the need for safe handling of this medicine. If you or your caregiver does handle broken tablets, wash your hands immediately. Please consult your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

The recommended dose is:

Adults who have had an organ transplant: On the first day of treatment, the usual dose is up to 5 mg per kilogram of body weight, then a usual daily dose of 1 mg to 4 mg per kilogram of body weight. During treatment your doctor will adjust the dose depending on your reaction to the medicine.

Adults with other conditions: The usual starting dose is 1 mg to 3 mg per kilogram of body weight, then a usual daily dose of less than 1 mg to 3 mg per kilogram of body weight. During treatment your doctor will adjust the dose depending on your reaction to the medicine.

Elderly patients may need a reduced dose.

Patients with kidney or liver problems may need a reduced dose.

Use in children

Children who have had organ transplant:

The dosing for children who have had an organ transplant is the same as adults.

Children with other conditions: The dosing for children with other conditions is the same as adults. Children who are considered overweight may require a higher dose.

If you take more azathioprine tablets than you should

If you take too many tablets, contact your doctor or pharmacist immediately.

If you forget to take azathioprine tablets

Do not take a double dose to make up for the dose that you missed. Inform your doctor if you do miss a dose. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the dose you missed and take your next dose when you are meant to. Otherwise, take it as soon as you remember, then go back to taking it as you would normally.

If you stop taking azathioprine tablets

Before you stop taking azathioprine tablets, consult with your doctor or pharmacist. Do not stop taking azathioprine tablets until your doctor tells you it is safe to do so.

If you have any further questions on the use of this product, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

4. Possible side effects

Like all medicines, azathioprine tablets can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them. The following side effects may happen with this medicine:

Stop taking azathioprine tablets and see a doctor straight away, if you notice any of the following serious side effects, you may need urgent medical treatment:

- allergic reaction, (these are uncommon side effects which may affect up to 1 in 100 people) the signs may include:
 - general tiredness, dizziness, feeling sick (nausea), being sick (vomiting), diarrhoea or abdominal pain
 - swelling of the eyelids, face or lips
 - redness of the skin, skin nodules or a skin rash (Including blisters, itching or peeling skin)
 - pain in the muscles or joints
 - sudden wheeziness, coughing or difficulty breathing

In severe cases these reactions may be life-threatening (this is rare which may affect up to 1 in 10,000 people).

- Skin rashes or redness, which may develop into life-threatening skin reactions including widespread rash with blisters and peeling skin, particularly occurring around the mouth, nose, eyes and genitals (*Stevens-Johnson syndrome*), extensive peeling of the skin (*toxic epidermal necrolysis*) (these may be very rare side effects which may affect up to 1 in 10,000 people)
- Reversible pneumonitis (inflammation of your lungs causing breathlessness, cough and fever) (these may be very rare side effects which may affect up to 1 in 10,000 people)
- problems with your blood and bone marrow, signs include weakness, tiredness, paleness, bruising easily, unusual bleeding or infections (these may be very common side effects which may affect more than 1 in 10 people)
- when azathioprine tablets is used in combination with other immunosuppressives you may get a virus which causes damage to your brain. This may cause headaches, changes in behaviour, impaired speech, worsening of abilities such as memory, attention and decision making (cognitive decline) and may be fatal (condition known as *JC virus associated Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy*) (these may be very rare side effects which may affect more than 1 in 10,000 people)

If you get any of the following serious side effects, talk to your doctor or specialist doctor immediately, you may need urgent medical treatment:

- you have a high temperature (fever) or other signs of an infection such as sore throat, sore mouth, urinary problems, or chest infection causing breathlessness and cough (these may be very common side effects which may affect more than 1 in 10 people)
- problems with your liver, signs include your skin or the whites of your eyes turn yellow jaundice) (these may be uncommon side effects which may affect up to 1 in 100 people)
- various types of cancers including blood, lymph and skin cancers (see section 2 Warnings and precautions) (these may be rare side effects which may affect up to 1 in 1000 people).
- *Sweet's syndrome* (also known as *acute febrile neutrophilic dermatosis*). You may develop a rash (raised red, pink or purple lumps which are sore to touch), particularly on your arms, hands, fingers, face and neck, which may also be accompanied by a fever (high temperature) (the rate at which these side effects occur is not known - cannot be estimated from available data)
- a certain type of lymphomas (*hepatosplenic T-cell lymphoma*). You may develop nose bleeds, fatigue, significant night sweats, weight loss and unexplained fevers (high temperature) (the rate at which these side effects occur is not known - cannot be estimated from available data)

If you notice any of the above, stop taking azathioprine tablets and see a doctor straight away.

Other side effects include:

Very common (may affect more than 1 in 10 people)

- low white blood cell level in your blood tests, which may cause an infections

Common (may affect up to 1 in 10 people)

- nausea (feeling sick)

Uncommon (may affect up to 1 in 100 people)

- anaemia (low red blood cell level) pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas), which may cause severe upper stomach pain,

Rare (may affect up to 1 in 1,000 people)

- You might notice some hair loss while taking azathioprine tablets. Often hair does grow again, even if you carry on taking azathioprine tablets. If you are worried ask your doctor.

Very rare (may affect up to 1 in 10,000 people)

- problems with your bowels leading to diarrhoea, abdominal pain, constipation, feeling or being sick (bowel perforation)

Not known (frequency cannot be estimated from the available data)

- photosensitivity (sensitivity to light or sunlight)
- You may develop a rash (raised red, pink or purple lumps which are sore to touch), particularly on your arms, hands, fingers, face and neck, which may also be accompanied by a fever (*Sweet's syndrome*, also known as *acute febrile neutrophilic dermatosis*). The rate at which these side effects occur is not known (cannot be estimated from available data).

Reporting of side effects

If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme Website: www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard or search for MHRA Yellow Card in the Google Play or Apple App Store.

By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

5. How to store azathioprine tablets

Keep this medicine out of the sight and reach of children.

Store in a dry place below 25°C. Protect from light.

Do not use this medicine after the expiry date which is stated on the label. The expiry date refers to the last day of that month.

Do not use this medicine if you notice visible signs of deterioration.

Do not throw away any medicines via wastewater or household waste. Ask your pharmacist how to throw away medicines you no longer use. These measures will help protect the environment.

6. Contents of the pack and other information

What azathioprine tablets contains

- The active substance is azathioprine.
- The other ingredients are: maize starch, microcrystalline cellulose, lactose monohydrate (see section 2), magnesium stearate, talc, sodium starch glycolate (Type A).

What azathioprine tablets look like and contents of the pack

Pale yellow, biconvex tablets scored on one side and engraved with a logo mortar and pestle on the other side.

Contents of pack: Blister pack.

Each blister contains 14 tablets. The tablets are supplied to your pharmacist in packs containing 28, 50, 56, 100 or 250 tablets, who will then provide you with the required number of tablets as prescribed by your doctor (not all pack sizes may be marketed).

This leaflet does not contain all the information about this medicine. If you have any questions or are not sure about anything, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Marketing Authorisation Holder and Manufacturer

Strides Pharma UK Ltd.
Unit 4, Metro Centre, Tolpits Lane,
Watford, Herts, UK, WD18 9SS
Tel: 01923 255580, Fax: 01923 255581

Azathioprine 50 mg tablets
PL 13606/0093

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