

## Azathioprine (Imuran)

Azathioprine is an oral immunosuppressant medication used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, and for transplant rejection prevention. It is used off-label for a variety of skin conditions, including atopic dermatitis, lupus, and blistering disorders.

### Considerations:

- Bloodwork, including complete blood count (CBC), kidney and liver function, must be checked before and periodically while taking this medication. A genetic enzyme blood test called TPMT (thiopurine methyltransferase) must be checked prior to initiation, to make sure you are able to metabolize the medication correctly. Side effects that may develop if you are unable to metabolize azathioprine correctly include: weakness, nausea, headache.
- Azathioprine may affect the bone marrow, leading to drop in white blood cell and platelet counts. If this happens, clinically you may experience fatigue, easy bruising, and easy bleeding.
- Risk of infection is higher while on azathioprine.
- There is a slightly increased risk of developing lymphomas, tumors, or hematologic (blood) cancers with long-term use of azathioprine.

### Side Effects:

- Most common: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abnormal liver function, rash, and fever.
- Please notify us if you experience any side effects.

### Drug Interactions

Please be aware that the following medications may interact with azathioprine and cause side effects. Drug interactions must be checked prior to initiation.

- Allopurinol (gout)
- ACE inhibitors (blood pressure)
- Coumadin/warfarin (blood thinner)
- Sulfa-based antibiotics (Bactrim)

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Updated 10/2020