

Azathioprine

For patients of the Interstitial Lung Disease Clinic

What is the name of the medicine my doctor has prescribed?

Generic Name	Brand Name
Azathioprine (az-uh-thahy-uh-preen)	Imuran

Why is this medication being recommended for me?

Azathioprine is in a class of drugs called **immunosuppressants**.

Azathioprine affects your body's immune system and reduces the amount of inflammation or active damage in your lungs. Inflammation is the precursor to fibrosis (scarring) in the lungs.

By reducing inflammation, it is hoped that Azathioprine will prevent the formation of lung fibrosis and allow your inflamed lung to return to normal.

What should I remember when taking Azathioprine?

Before taking Azathioprine:

1. Tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to Azathioprine or any other medications.
2. Tell your doctor and pharmacist what prescription and non-prescription medications, nutritional supplements, and herbal products you are taking.
3. Tell your doctor if you have any type of infection, or if you have, or have ever had kidney, liver, or pancreas disease.
4. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You should use birth control to be sure you or your partner will not become pregnant while you are taking this medication. Do not breastfeed or chestfeed while you are taking this medication.



5. If you are having surgery, including dental surgery, tell your doctor or dentist that you are taking Azathioprine.
6. You should know that Azathioprine may decrease your ability to fight infection. Stay away from people who are sick, wash your hands often, and look for infection and fever. If you get an infection, please contact your family doctor as soon as possible.

What are the possible side effects of this medicine?

Azathioprine may cause side effects. Some side effects can be serious. Tell your doctor if you have any of these symptoms, if they are severe or do not go away:

- upset stomach, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- mouth sores
- lack of energy
- loss of appetite
- pain in the upper right part of the stomach
- yellowing of the skin or eyes
- flu-like symptoms, muscle aches or both
- rash

What monitoring will I need?

Your doctor will order regular lab tests to check your response to Azathioprine and monitor for side effects. You will need to have your blood counts (white blood cells, red blood cells, platelets) and liver enzymes checked regularly.

Who can I call if I have question or concerns about Azathioprine?

Please talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions or concerns about this medication.

This medicine fact sheet is for your information only. This site does not provide medical advice. It should not replace talking with your pharmacist. Please talk to your pharmacist or other health care professional if you have any questions about this medicine.

Visit www.uhnpatienteducation.ca for more health information. Contact us to provide feedback or request this brochure in a different format, such as large print or electronic formats: pfep@uhn.ca

© 2021 University Health Network. All rights reserved.
Use this material for your information only. It does not replace advice from your doctor or other health care professional. Do not use this information for diagnosis or treatment. Ask your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition. You may print 1 copy of this brochure for non-commercial and personal use only.