



Washington University in St. Louis

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

**The Washington University Inflammatory Bowel Disease Clinic
Medication Information Sheet for Azathioprine (Imuran/Azasan) and Mercaptopurine (6-MP)**

Brand Names: Imuran or Azasan, and 6 Mercaptopurine (6-MP)

Generic Names: Azathioprine and purinethol

Drug Class: Immunosuppressants

What do these medications do?

Used for the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease by inhibiting (suppressing) the activity of the immune system. These related medications work by decreasing inflammation, which is an underlying problem in both ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.

Possible Side Effects:

These medications can temporarily lower the number of your white blood cells, which can put you at risk for developing infections. They can also decrease the numbers of platelets, which are necessary for proper clotting. If they become too low, we may adjust the dose or temporarily stop the medication. Therefore, it is important to follow your doctor's guidelines for laboratory testing. You will also need blood work to check your liver function.

A complete blood count and liver (hepatic) function panel is drawn at least every two weeks, four to six times, and then once monthly. Each physician may have a specific preference for obtaining these laboratory values. Please call the office after getting your labs done during the initiation of the medicine. Side effects lessen and/or disappear with decrease of dosage.

These medications may cause:

- Nausea, vomiting, rash, fever, joint pain and/or diarrhea

Call your doctor *immediately* if you have any of these side effects:

- Unusual bleeding or bruising
- Fever or other signs of infection
- Sore throat
- Mouth sores
- Skin rash
- Abdominal pain
- Jaundice, pale (clay) colored stools or dark (tea) colored urine
- You will be tested for TB prior to receiving Humira using a Mantoux test (PPD) and then yearly while taking this medicine. You may also be required to have a chest X-ray. If you have TB, you will need to be treated before starting Humira.

Pancreatitis may occur in approximately 5% of patients within the first month. Pancreatitis is inflammation of the pancreas which can cause nausea, vomiting and/or abdominal pain. It reverses once the medication is stopped. Lymphoma has been reported in people taking these medications; however, it is very rare.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding: These medications should be avoided in these instances.

Dosage and Administration:

- These medications may be taken with food
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember
- Please notify us if you take any of these medications:
 - ACE inhibitors (Lisinopril, Enalapril, Vasotec, Monopril, Uniretic, Zestoretic)
 - Cyclosporin
 - Methotrexate
 - Anticoagulants (Coumadin, Heparin, Lovenox, Plavix)
 - Neuromuscular blockers (Tubocurarine, Pancuronium, Pavalon)