

Azathioprine for Organ Transplants

(ay-za-thigh-oh-preen)

Brand names:

Apo-azathioprine®, Imuran®,
Mylan-Azathioprine, Teva-Azathioprine®

What it does

- helps prevent or treat rejection
- usually given with other anti-rejection medications
- suppresses your body's immune system

How to take

- Take exactly as directed.
- You can take this medication with food or on an empty stomach. If you find your stomach is upset when taking this medication, take it with food.
- If you cannot swallow the pill, let us know. We might be able to switch you to a liquid form.

What to watch for

Most side effects either go away with time or when the dose is reduced.

Get your blood checked as directed.

Tell your transplant team if any of these side effects bother you or do not go away:

- upset stomach
- throwing up
- diarrhea (runny stool or 'poo')
- hair loss
- mouth sores
- bleeding or bruising easily
- rash
- chills
- feeling dizzy or lightheaded

While the following side effects do not happen very often, if they do, it can be serious.

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- hives or skin blisters
- fever over 38°C (100.5°F)
- very bad sore throat
- trouble breathing
- chest pain or pressure
- very bad stomach (belly) or back pain
- pain passing urine (going 'pee')
- very tired or no energy
- fainting
- any bleeding that you cannot stop
- any blood in what you throw up (vomit) or in your stool ('poo')

Azathioprine for Organ Transplants - *continued*

Late or missed dose

Missed doses can increase your chances of your body rejecting your transplanted organ.

If you miss a dose and it is **less than half the time** before you must take your next dose:

- Take the missed dose when you remember.
- Then take your next dose on schedule.

If you miss a dose and it is **more than half the time** before you must take your next dose:

- Skip the missed dose.
- Then take your next dose on schedule.

Example:

If you take this medication every 12 hours and you remember to take your medication within 6 hours of the time you were to take it, take the missed dose.

If it is more than 6 hours after the time you were to take it, skip that dose. Wait and take your next dose as scheduled.

Never take 2 doses at the same time or take any extra doses as a way of making up for a missed dose.

Keep track of the doses you miss. Note when how many were missed and when. Give this to us at your next Transplant Clinic visit or next visit to your doctor.

Other notes

- Store this medication in dry, dark place at room temperature. Store liquid medication in the refrigerator.
- If you find your stomach is upset:
 - Eat smaller meals more often during the day rather than just three meals a day.
 - Suck on hard, sugar-free candy or chew sugar-free gum.
- Protect yourself from infection. Wash your hands often. Try to stay away from people who have a cold, the flu, or other infections.
- Protect your skin when out in the sun. There is a greater chance of skin or other cancers with this medication.
- Always check with the Transplant Clinic team before:
 - Taking any new medications, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, natural health or herbal products.
 - Getting any vaccinations.
- For women: You need to understand the risks and benefits of taking this medication when pregnant. If you are pregnant or you could get pregnant, talk to the transplant team about this.

Questions?

Call the Transplant Clinic at 604-592-0922