

# Medication Information Card

## Azathioprine

(Ay – za – thye – oh – preen)

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### Other names for this medication

Imuran<sup>®</sup>

There are many other names for this medication.

### How this medication is used

This medication affects the immune system. It is used to help many problems.

This medication helps patients who have had a kidney transplant to help stop the body from rejecting the new kidney.

This medication treats rheumatoid arthritis symptoms such as swelling, stiffness and joint pain. This medication slows down the disease and protects the joints from further damage. It is usually tried after other arthritis medications have not worked. It may take 2 to 3 months to get the full effect of this medication to help arthritis symptoms.

This medication is also used to treat inflammatory bowel disease such as Crohn's disease and Ulcerative Colitis. It helps prevent flare-ups, heal fistulas and may help to decrease or stop the use of steroid medications such as prednisone. It may take 3 to 6 months to get the full effect of this medication to help inflammatory bowel disease.

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## **How to take this medication**

Take this medication exactly as directed by your doctor.

To avoid stomach upset, take this medication with a meal or snack.

If you miss a dose of this medication and you remember within 4 hours, take it as soon as you remember. If it is more than 4 hours, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular time. Do not take 2 doses at one time.

Tell all of your doctors that you are taking this medication.

It is important that you see your doctor regularly while taking this medication. You will need to have blood tests done while taking this medication.

Talk to your doctor if you or your partner take this medication and are planning a pregnancy.

Due to increased risk of infection, check with your doctor before having any vaccinations, flu shots or dental work.

## **While taking this medication you may notice**

- reduced appetite
- diarrhea
- sores in mouth
- nausea
- thinning hair
- muscle aches and joint pains

You may have nausea during the first few weeks of treatment. To avoid upset stomach and nausea, take this medication with food.

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## Contact your doctor if you notice

- unusual tiredness or weakness
- signs of infection such as fever, chills or sore throat
- signs of bleeding such as easy bruising, black or bloody stool, red urine
- sudden onset of pain in upper abdomen with nausea and vomiting
- skin rash
- trouble breathing
- dry cough
- yellowing of the skin or eyes