Azathioprine

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CANADIAN CHILDREN INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE NETWORK
A CH.I.L.D. Foundation Initiative

What this medication is used for

Widely used for children and adults with Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis.

How this medication works

Azathioprine impacts the immune system to reduce inflammation. It belongs to a class of medications called "Immunomodulators."

How to use this medication

-Available as a tablet.

-Generally given once daily.
-It can take 6 -12 weeks to work. Keep taking your medication during this time and continue to take it as prescribed afterwards, even after feeling well again.

Where treatment is administered



Fill your prescription at your pharmacy.

Special tests done prior to starting

Blood tests may be done prior to starting.

How long to use this medication

This medication will be used to get your IBD under control and keep it under control long-term. Other medications may be used with Azathioprine.

Vaccines

✗ Live vaccines - Not safe

✓ Inactivated vaccines - Safe

Monitoring during treatment

-Regular blood work will be done to monitor for side effects. The frequency of the blood work will be determined by your healthcare team.

-Stool tests, endoscopy and/or other imaging will be done to monitor for response.

Side Effects

-Nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. Take with food to lessen these side effects.

-A small number of children develop pancreatitis shortly after starting azathioprine (inflammation of the pancreas).

-Rarely, inflammation of liver, and decreased bone marrow function can occur. This will be monitored through bloodwork.

-Medications that affect the immune system may be associated with developing infections and cancer (very rarely).

-Azathioprine may increase sensitivity and long-term skin cancer risk. Therefore, limit exposure to sun and UV lights, wear protective clothing and hat, and use sunscreen with high SPF.

When I should call my doctor

Please call if:
-You want to or have already stopped the medicine
-If you are concerned about any side effects

Other reasons to call your doctor:
-Fever or think you have an infection
-vomiting or abdominal pain

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