

## Renal Services

# Azathioprine: Information for kidney transplant patients

### What is it used for?

Azathioprine is an immunosuppressant drug which helps to prevent rejection of your transplanted kidney.

### How does it work?

It works by stopping the body's production of cells that make up part of your immune system. This dampens down your immune system to stop rejection of your new kidney.

### How do I take it?

You should take it once daily with food to help prevent side effects. Azathioprine is available as 25mg and 50mg tablets.

### Are there any side effects?

You may have an upset stomach with diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting, heartburn or indigestion.

Azathioprine can also lower some of your blood test results, including some types of white blood cells. Because of this it is important that you report to the doctor any unexplained bruising or bleeding as this can be a symptom. Your doctor will monitor your blood tests in clinic.

### Is there anything else I need to know?

**Taking immunosuppressant medicines may mean you experience some long term effects on your health that you need to be aware of. These include an increased risk of infection and an increased risk of cancer. You should follow all the general health advice given to**



## Patient Information

**you by the transplant team. Please read the booklet they give you carefully, as this will provide you with more information.**

**You should not be vaccinated with certain 'live' vaccines whilst you are on Azathioprine. The transplant team or pharmacist will be able to advise you on vaccines that are safe for you to have.**

**Allopurinol**, a common drug used for gout, can interfere with your Azathioprine levels, so it is important to let your GP, pharmacist or any other doctor that looks after you know that you are taking Azathioprine. If in doubt whether any medication is safe to take with your transplant medication then always check with a member of the transplant team, or renal pharmacist.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 7777 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

### Document History

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