

Renal Services

Azathioprine: information for kidney transplant patients

What is Azathioprine used for?

Azathioprine is an immunosuppressant medicine. It helps prevent rejection of your transplanted kidney.

How does Azathioprine work?

Azathioprine works by stopping your body's production of cells that are part of your immune system. This controls your immune system to stop rejection of your new kidney.

How to take Azathioprine

You should take one dose a day. You should take it with food to help prevent side effects. Azathioprine is available as 25mg and 50mg tablets.

Side effects

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

Azathioprine can lower your blood test results. This can include tests that measure your white blood cells. This means it is important that you report any unexplained bruising or bleeding to your doctor as this can be a symptom. Your doctor will monitor your blood tests in clinic.



Important: long-term effects

You are taking immunosuppressant medicines. This means that you may experience long-term health effects. Long-term health effects include increased risks of infection and cancer.

It is important that you follow the transplant team's health advice. Please read the booklet that they give you. It provides important information that you need.

You should not be vaccinated with 'live' vaccines while you are taking Azathioprine. The transplant team or pharmacist can advise you on vaccines that are safe for you.

Allopurinol should not be taken with Azathioprine

Allopurinol is a common drug used for gout. It can interfere with your azathioprine levels. This means it is important to let your GP, pharmacist or doctor providing care know that you are taking azathioprine.

Always check with a member of the transplant team, or renal pharmacist, if you are not sure if a medicine is safe to take with your transplant medicines.

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.

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