

---

## Treatment Information

### Azathioprine

Azathioprine is an effective treatment for inflammatory arthritis. It is not a painkiller. It is given to reduce the inflammation in your joints. It is an immunosuppressant drug which damps down the inflammatory process that damages your joints. Azathioprine is also known by the trade name IMURAN. The tablets are yellow and come in 25mg and 50mg doses.

#### **How should I take the tablets?**

You should take the prescribed dose with food and swallow the tablets with plenty of fluid.

#### **How long does Azathioprine take to work?**

Do not expect an instant improvement. It sometimes begins to work after a few weeks but may take up to 3 months before you notice any benefit. You should continue taking your other medication as advised.

#### **Are there any side effects?**

Some people experience side effects with Azathioprine. The most common ones are:

- Nausea
- Loss of appetite
- Reduced number of blood cells
- Skin rash

#### **What tests will I have?**

Regular blood tests (full blood count and liver function tests will need to be done monthly).

You should see your doctor if you develop any signs of infection.

#### **Will Azathioprine interfere with other tablets?**

You should not take azathioprine with the anti-gout tablet Allopurinol also known as Zyloric.

#### **Are there any precautions I should take?**

If you plan to become pregnant you should discuss your treatment with your doctor as soon as possible. You should consult your doctor before having any live vaccinations. You should see your doctor if you develop signs of fever.

## Rheumatology department Patient Information

---

### Contact Details

If you have any further questions or need advice about your treatment phone the Rheumatology Advice line on

**01202 442849.**

[www.poole.nhs.uk/our\\_services/rheumatology.asp](http://www.poole.nhs.uk/our_services/rheumatology.asp)

For further health-related information, please contact:

**The Health Information & Resource Centre**

Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Longfleet Road

Poole

BH15 2JB

Telephone: (01202) 448003

Rheumatology Practitioners

December 2007. Date of Review January 2010

Rheumatology Department, Poole Hospital NHS Trust

Dr. P. Thompson, Dr. S. Richards

**We can supply this information in larger print, on audiotape, or have it translated for you. A member of staff will be happy to discuss this with you. Please call PALS on 01202 448499 or the Health Information Centre on 01202 448003 for further advice**