

Azathioprine, AZAMUN®, IMUREL® – in the treatment of rheumatic diseases

Indications

Azathioprine (Azamun®, Imurel®) is used for treatment of indications such as active rheumatoid arthritis and other long-term joint inflammations and inflammatory connective tissue diseases.

Drug product and mode of action

Azathioprine belongs to the class of traditional antirheumatic drugs. It is a so-called cytostatic drug that alleviates the rheumatic inflammatory reaction in the joints, skin and elsewhere in the body. Azathioprine slows down or stops the progress of the disease.

Dosage and method of administration

Azathioprine is available as 25 and 50 mg tablets. Treatment dose varies from 1.5 to 2.5 mg/kg body weight. **Tablets are taken with meals with a lot of fluid.**

Adverse effects

The most common adverse effects are nausea, a feeling of fullness in the upper abdomen and abdominal pain. These, as well as drug fever, a rare adverse effect, usually appear within the first weeks of treatment. Hypersensitivity reactions and occurrence of mucosal ulcers are rare. Azathioprine may increase susceptibility to infections. The drug must not be taken during a severe infection. It may also cause elevation of liver enzymes and a decrease of white blood cells or blood platelets.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Azathioprine can be used during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Follow-up

Safety tests are taken 2–3, 6 and 12 weeks after onset of treatment, and then once every 3–6 months. The results are checked at the health centre. The safety tests include the following: **Basic blood count, B-NEUT and ALT.**

CREA, U-ChemScr, CRP and ESR are measured in connection with treatment assessment before doctor's appointment every 6–12 months.

Other considerations

Azathioprine does not need to be stopped in connection with surgery. Vaccines that contain live attenuated organisms can be given with discretion during treatment. Before the onset of treatment, please check that your vaccinations are up to date. Oral and dental health must also be maintained.

Link [Reumalääkkeiden ohjeet | Reumatalo.fi | Terveyskylä.fi](#) (in Finnish)

[Wellbeing services county of Satakunta](#)